



**SCOTTISH  
NATURAL  
HERITAGE**



No 79

Mar Lodge Estate: landscape assessment

Turnbull Jeffrey Partnership

1996

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Sandeman House, 55 High Street, Royal Mile, Edinburgh EH1 1SR**

<b>Nominated Officer:</b>	<b>Ron Macdonald, North East Region</b>
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THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND

**MAR LODGE ESTATE  
Landscape Assessment**



**FINAL REPORT**

TURNBULL JEFFREY PARTNERSHIP  
Landscape Architects

May 1996





## **PREFACE**

This report forms part of the National Programme of Landscape Character Assessment, which is being carried out by Scottish Natural Heritage, in partnership with local authorities and other agencies.

The National Programme aims to improve our knowledge and understanding of the contribution that landscape makes to the natural heritage of Scotland.

This study was commissioned by The National Trust for Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage. It provides an assessment of the landscape character of Mar Lodge Estate at a greater level of detail than for other studies in the National Programme. The study also considers the likely pressures and opportunities for change in the landscape, assesses the sensitivity of the landscape to change and includes guidelines indicating how landscape character may be conserved, enhanced or restructured as appropriate.

The report will be of interest to all those concerned with land management and landscape change. More specifically, it is intended inform the Management Plan for Mar Lodge which is being drawn up by the National Trust for Scotland in association with SNH and other organisations.

The views contained within this report represent those of the consultants, Turnbull Jeffrey Partnership, and do not necessarily reflect the policies and views of the sponsors.





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The Turnbull Jeffrey Partnership Study Team comprised Keith Horner (Project Manager), Mark Turnbull, Carol Anderson, Lisé Hearn, Amanda Beaton and Sarah Masterton.



**Chapter 1**  
**INTRODUCTION**



## 1.1 BACKGROUND

On 1 July 1995, the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) acquired the 77,500 acre Mar Lodge Estate which forms part of the core area of the Cairngorms Working Party Study Area (Figure 1). The international and national importance of the Cairngorms is recognised by a variety of existing and prospective scenic, nature conservation and geomorphological designations throughout the area. The Estate also contributes to the recreational importance of the area, where a wide range of countryside experiences are available, from challenging winter sports in a hostile mountain environment to easily visited, scenic locations in the surrounding straths and glens.

Mar Lodge Estate lies 3 miles west of Braemar and is representative of the range of different landscapes typified by the wider Cairngorms area. A large proportion of the Estate forms part of two National Scenic Areas. The Estate also includes an internationally important assembly of geomorphological and ecological features, as well as archaeological remains of pre-clearance farming communities. Many of these features contribute to the Estate's recreational importance. A wide variety of buildings on the Estate, some of which are listed, also contribute to the historical and cultural heritage of the Estate.

NTS are currently commencing preparation of a Management Plan which aims to ensure that the Estate is run in a sustainable and integrated manner for the benefit of the nation. Through their ownership, NTS intends to demonstrate, in partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and others that conservation, public access and field sports can be managed in harmony on the Estate, although conservation of the natural heritage qualities of the Estate will be the over-riding priority. The main focus of the Management Plan will be to ensure the continuing conservation and restoration of the Estate's internationally important geomorphology, flora, fauna, wild land quality and archaeological heritage.

Currently, a Landscape Assessment Study, commissioned by SNH, is being undertaken for the Cairngorms Working Party Study Area, comprising a strategic overview of the differing landscapes which occur within that area. The primary aim of the Mar Lodge Estate Landscape Assessment Study, commissioned by NTS in December 1995, is to provide detailed information about the landscape of the Estate which will be used to inform and shape the content of the Management Plan. The Mar Lodge Estate study therefore uses the wider landscape assessment as its basis.

The baseline landscape character information included in this report can also be used to act as a monitoring tool to determine the degree of landscape change over a prolonged period of time throughout the Estate, whilst also allowing the assessment of activities/proposals by adjacent landowners which may have visual implications on the landscape of the Mar Lodge Estate.

## 1.2 THE STUDY BRIEF OBJECTIVES

The Study Brief identified a series of objectives which the Study was to address. These objectives were:

- To produce in written and map form a detailed assessment of the landscape character of the Mar Lodge Estate which will form the basis for future monitoring of landscape change.



- To provide information about different landscape characters for use by land managers and to inform the Management Plan.
- To consider the likely pressures and opportunities for landscape change within the Estate and to assess the sensitivity of particular landscape character areas to such change.
- To develop guidelines indicating how landscape character may be conserved, enhanced or restructured as appropriate.
- To provide guidance on how various types of land-use change might best be accommodated within the different landscape character areas identified.

### **1.3 METHODOLOGY**

The methodology used for the Study has been broadly based on that set out in 'Landscape Assessment Guidance' published by the Countryside Commission (CCP 423). The assessment has utilised information gained through background research, consultations and desk study, supplemented by field survey work, to define a number of different landscape character areas throughout the Estate. Consultations have assisted in identifying the special landscape characteristics of the Estate and allowed consideration of the various current and potential pressures on the landscape. This information has been used to develop guidance on a range of issues likely to result in landscape change in the area. A fuller account of the Study methodology is contained in Appendix C.

Throughout this report, all place names and other references have been taken from the 1:50,000 Ordnance Survey Landranger Maps Sheet No's 36 (1992) and 43 (1989).

### **1.4 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT**

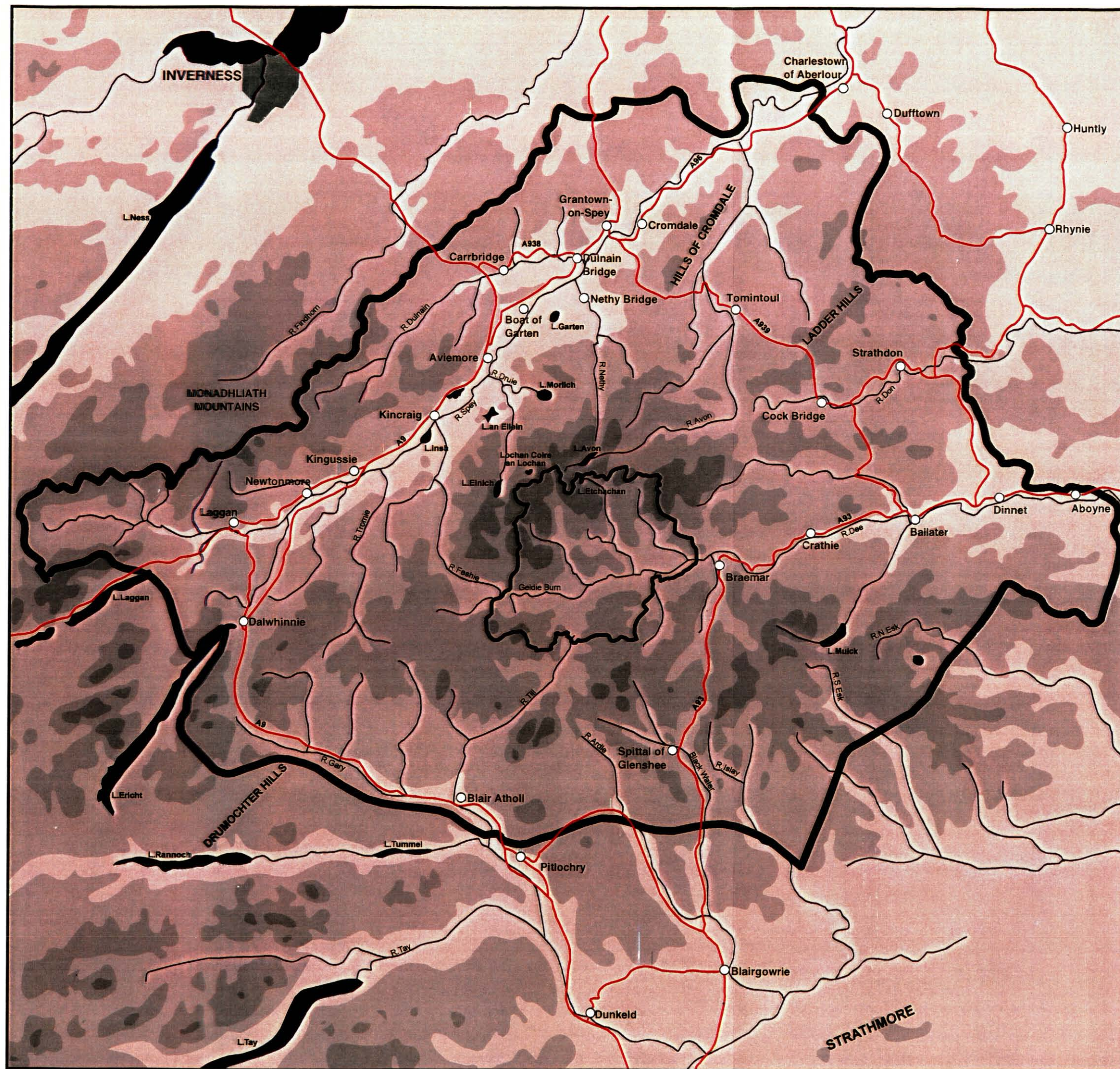
Chapter 2 describes how the present day landscape of Mar Lodge Estate has evolved by the combination of both physical factors and human influences. It outlines the major geological and geomorphological processes which have led to area's strong physical character and describes the major themes of man's activities in the area in terms of how these have influenced landscape character. It also discusses the main cultural associations of the Mar Lodge landscape.

Chapter 3 introduces the range of factors which contribute to the distinctiveness of landscape character. After describing the landscape character and major features of the Cairngorm landscape, the Mar Lodge Estate landscape is considered in relation to this wider context. A number of broad Landscape Types and more detailed Landscape Character Areas within the Estate are identified, described and illustrated, highlighting their key landscape characteristics and elements.

Distinctive landscape attributes of the Mar Lodge Estate landscape are identified, described and illustrated in Chapter 4. These are landscape elements or features which may occur in a number of different landscape character areas but which, collectively, add special character or sense of place to the Estate.

Chapter 5 considers the potential ways in which the landscape of the Mar Lodge Estate may change in the future as a result of planning policies and controls, proposed estate









management initiatives and external factors outwith the direct control of the Estate.

Chapter 6 outlines a Landscape Strategy and associated Guidelines aimed at informing decision making on the likely implications on landscape character and the appearance of the landscape which may result from adopting particular development or management initiatives.

Chapter 7 summarises and outlines conclusions to the study, and is followed by various appendices.

## **1.5 STUDY AREA**

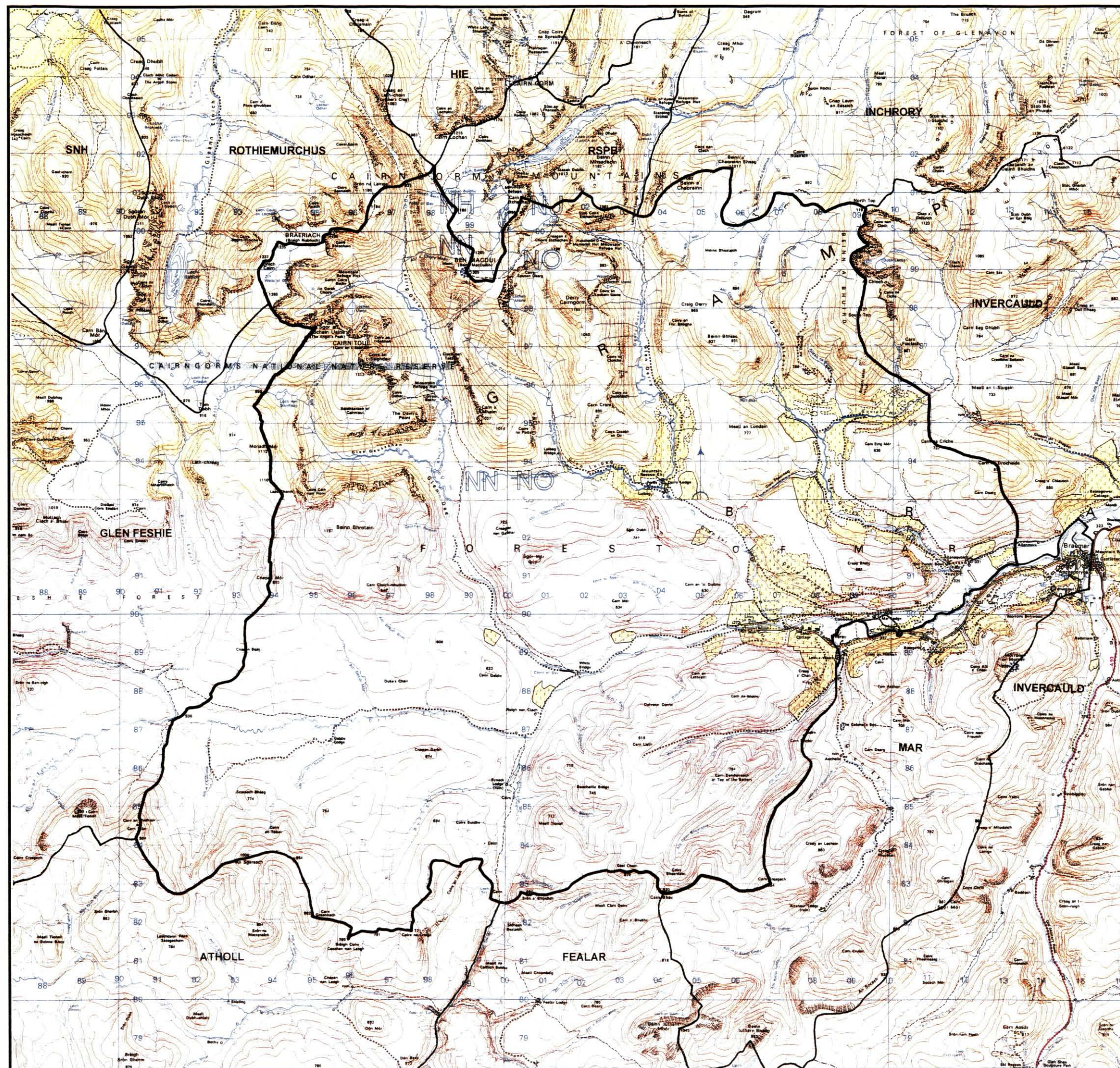
The study area considered has been based on the Estate boundary (Figure 2). However, in certain areas, it has been extended to include complete Landscape Character Areas, or where this is not practical, an indication is given of the approximate extent to which a particular Landscape Character Area extends outwith with Estate boundary.

## **1.6 FIELD SURVEY**

Much of the landscape assessment work was undertaken during January 1996. Given the rugged, remote and elevated character of much of the Estate and the associated adverse weather and ground conditions in terms of reduced visibility and snow coverage at this time of year, it was not feasible to survey all the landscape character areas which have been identified. The identification and description of some Landscape Character Areas has therefore depended on existing knowledge of the area by the Study Team, supplemented by desk study and literature research.









**Figure 2**  
**Mar Lodge Estate**

**Legend**

-  Estate Boundary
-  Adjacent Estate Boundaries



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## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The landscape which we see today throughout the Mar Lodge Estate has evolved over a prolonged period of time as a result of the complex interaction of various physical and human processes, some of which still continue today. Geological and geomorphological processes have played a dominant role in shaping today's landscape. Subsequent weathering has led to the development of particular soil characteristics which in turn have influenced vegetation patterns. Man has further altered the landscape through settlement, farming, forest clearance and tree planting, along with other activities and developments. Throughout the Estate, on-going geomorphological activity and man-influenced land-use and management changes illustrate the dynamic and continually evolving character of the landscape.

This section explores the evolution of the landscape of the Mar Lodge Estate, broadly describing the principal physical and human influences which have shaped the landscape and contributed to the landscape character of the area. It also considers the cultural associations which have been connected with the Mar Lodge Estate.

## 2.2 PHYSICAL FACTORS

### The Geological Foundations

Geological evidence, although incomplete, indicates that the evolution of the Cairngorms has been a long and varied process. Around 500 million years ago, great thicknesses of sediments were laid down on the floor of an ancient ocean, subsequently being metamorphosed and folded into huge mountains. At the same time, vast masses of granite also formed below these mountains and, being lighter than the surrounding rock, this granite mass rose through the earth's crust and finally came to rest within a few kilometres of the earth's surface.

Over many millions of years, erosion and weathering wore down these vast alpine-style mountains to their foundations, revealing granite cores from beneath the encircling schists (Figure 3). The northern section of the Estate forms part of the largest homogenous granite mass in Britain. Granite landscapes are characterised by rounded slopes, with tors and extensive boulder fields (Figure 4). Granite landscapes also tend to be less fertile than those forming on underlying schists, and therefore have a more barren character, whereas the schist-based mountains are characterised by more fertile soils and are generally heather or grassland covered.

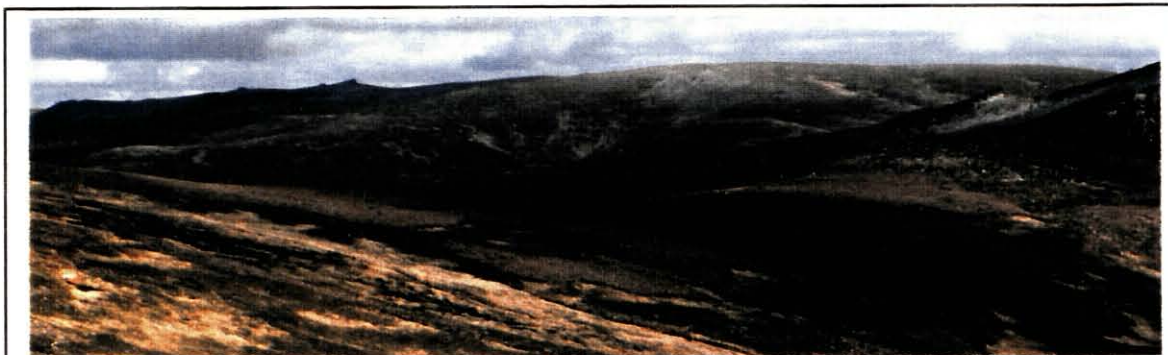


Figure 4 - The rounded, smooth landforms of granite landscapes





During the Tertiary Period, commencing 65 million years ago, the climate became considerably warmer and wetter than it is today, resulting in rivers cutting into the granite mass, creating many smooth, steep-sided valleys. Before the on-set of glaciation, the landscape would have comprised broad plateau surfaces, rolling hills and shallow river valleys, with extensive occurrences of deeply weathered granite bedrock. Many of these features survive today on a scale that is exceptional in glaciated mountains of Northern Europe, suggesting that glaciation resulted in minimal modification of the mountain plateaux compared with the effect it had on the surrounding glens.

### The Influence of Ice

About 2.5 million years ago, there was a major cooling of the climate. Glaciers formed over the upland areas as snows built up. Many of the large features of glacial erosion show the imprint of successive glaciations, indicating that the Ice Age consisted of many glacial periods interspersed by warmer periods. It is these glaciations which have left an indelible mark on the landscape seen today.

The intensity of glacial erosion was much more significant in the areas surrounding the plateaux, producing a series of deeply eroded glens or glacial troughs which cut into and through the gently rolling pre-glacial landscape, exploiting inherent weaknesses in the underlying rock structure. Here the ice was thicker and faster flowing, making it very effective at eroding the granite. In places such as the Lairig Ghru, the ice carved through original watersheds to create spectacular glacial breaches, as well as creating truncated spurs where glens were straightened (Figure 5). These glacial breaches tend to cut across pre-glacial valleys such as the Dee and Geldie. Small glaciers carved deep corries into the edge of the plateaux, such as the corries of Braeriach (Figure 6) and Beinn à Bhuid.



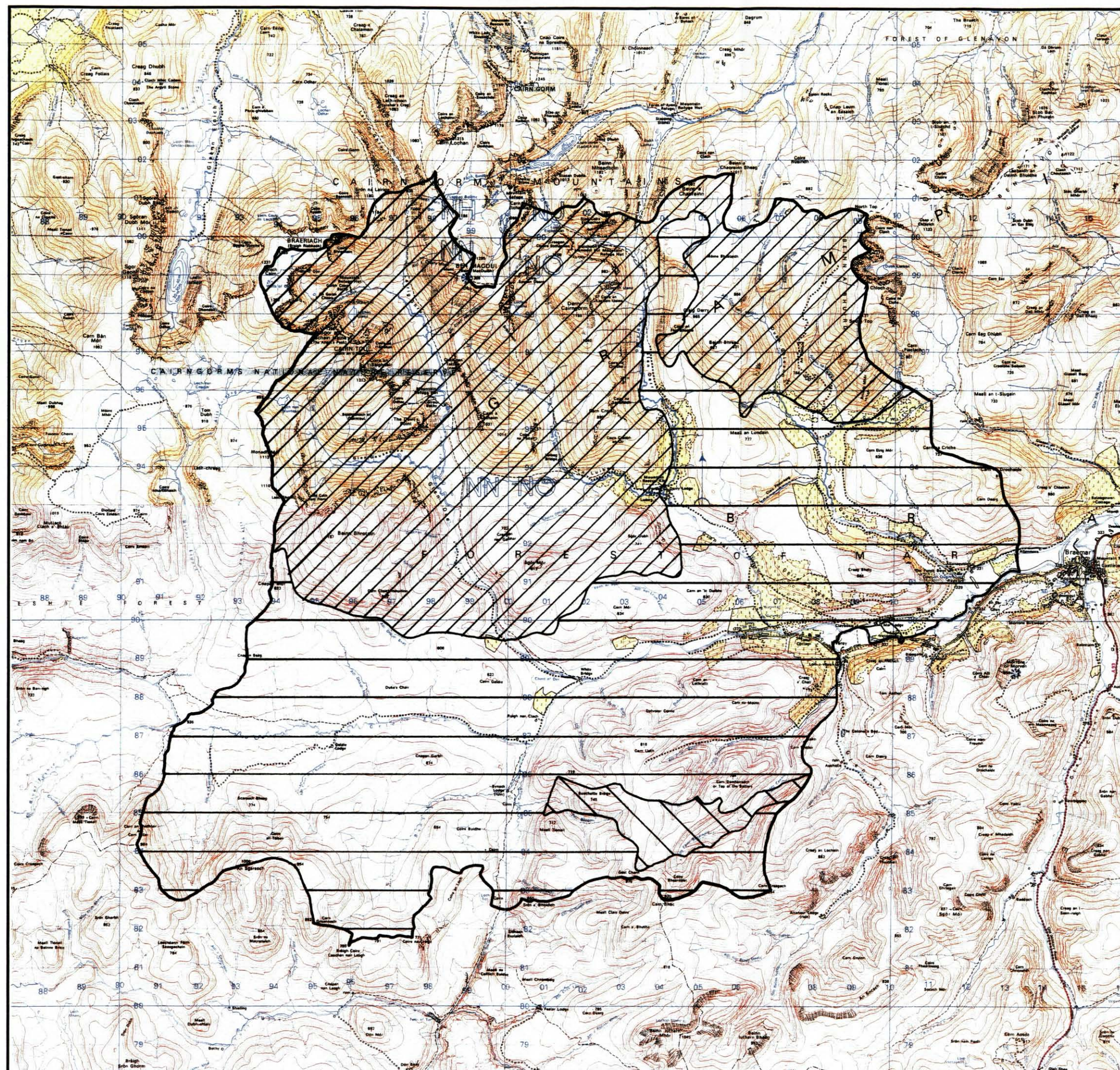
Figure 5 - The deeply carved glacial trough of the Lairig Ghru cuts through the rolling pre-glacial plateau



Figure 6 - The deeply gouged corries of Braeriach







**Figure 3**  
**Simplified Geology**

**Simplified Legend**

-  Granite
-  Caledonian Schists
-  Limestone and Calcareous Schists



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In the areas surrounding the central plateaux, glacial action tended to accentuate weaknesses in the more complex schist rocks, producing a more varied landform pattern. The Cairngorms were last fully covered by an ice sheet approximately 18,000 years ago. Analysis of plant and insect remains, as well as landform remains, indicates that the Ice Age did not end in a smooth transition to interglacial conditions, but with a series of rapid climatic changes. As the last glaciers melted, so extensive morainic deposits were created which covered many former landform features, as in Glen Derry/Luibeg, Glen Geusachan and An Garbh Coire. Also, palaeoenvironmental records preserved in loch and bog sediments form an important record for reconstructing landscape and climatic change during this period. Physical evidence and writings from travellers also indicate that parts of Braeriach may have held perennial snow or ice as recently as the Little Ice Age which occurred between the 17th and 19th centuries. This certainly corresponds with known glacial advances elsewhere in Europe and with periods of worse climate and hard winters in Scotland.

The juxtaposition of pre-glacial and glacial features within the central plateaux forms a landscape of selective glacial erosion which is internationally recognised and forms a landscape of considerable geomorphological interest.

### **Meltwater Activity**

Many landforms in the Cairngorms were formed by meltwater rivers flowing beneath or off the ice sheets as they began to retreat and thin at the end of the Ice Age. Highly mobile meltwater rivers, containing enormous volumes of water, carried large amounts of sediment and debris and changed the patterns of unstable morainic debris deposited by the glaciers. These have formed a number of characteristic features still found in today's landscape. In places, these rivers cut into underlying bedrock forming a series of channels which are now dry, such as at Clais Fhearnaig. Some rivers deposited sediment along the upper edges of glaciers as kame terraces or as eskers on the lower slopes.

Well beyond the glacier fronts, meltwaters deposited large areas of sands and gravels in many of the main glens, which were subsequently slowly dissected as the discharge rate and carrying capacity of the meltwaters subsided.

### **Periglacial Landscape**

Since the end of the glacial period, cold climate, non-glacial processes continued to modify the landscape to varying degrees. In particular, frost and ground ice shattered the granite bedrock, producing extensive areas of broken rock or blockfields which cover many of the plateaux landscapes (Figure 7). On steeper slopes, frost weathering produced rock fall and the build up of scree. Elsewhere, soil flow processes carried loose boulders downhill to create distinctive sheets, terraces and lobes of debris. This process continues today to a limited extent.

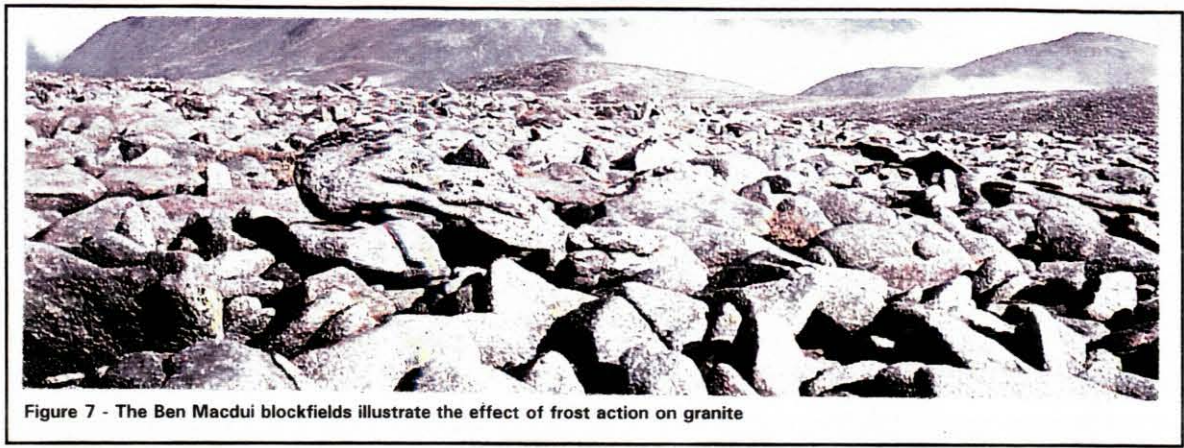


Figure 7 - The Ben Macdui blockfields illustrate the effect of frost action on granite

### Landscape Stabilisation

After the end of the glacial period, the relatively warm, temperate climate led to an increase in vegetation cover. Initially, sparse vegetation cover allowed the sands and gravels deposited by glaciers to be easily shifted by running water. However, areas of sedge and grass pioneer communities soon colonised the hill slopes and valley floors and the binding effect of their root systems helped to create more stable ground conditions and reduce the erosive effect of running water.

As the climate continued to become warmer, so vegetation developed further, with dwarf birch, crowberry and juniper dominating an arctic shrub tundra vegetation. The landscape at this time still retained a strong open character.

Gradually, after the retreat of the ice, invading tree species began to become established on the areas which were not blanket bog or mountain top. Birch and hazel woods became established in the glens, with grass and heath on the higher slopes. Pine trees arrived around 7000 years ago and came to dominate the natural woodland, possibly extending to a maximum tree line of about 800 metres during this time. The landscape at this time would have had a predominately wooded appearance. During periods of significantly wetter weather, which waterlogged soils and led to an expansion of blanket bog, the extent of pine forest was reduced. As these bogs dried out, so birch recolonised only to be overwhelmed by further peat growth in wetter periods.

The gradual reduction in woodland cover was not a linear process but rather a series of retreats and advances, primarily climate-related, but in later periods also human influenced and occurring over a very prolonged timescale.

The development and nature of vegetation establishment, together with the fertility of the underlying rocks, has also influenced soil types and extent within the Estate. At one extreme, the boulders and screes of the plateaux have been colonised so far by bacteria and a few lichens which are only the first steps in soil formation. Here, on the highest ground, above 1000 m, wind, frost, the short growing season and a lack of water in dry periods, depress plant growth, creating a desert of stones, bare gravel and sand. These soils forming on the granite bedrock of the area are thinner, more arid, more gravelly and thus more infertile than those forming on schists (Figure 8). They also are at a much earlier stage in their development. The bare gravelly plateaux are generally covered by a well-drained granite grit, with a thin infertile soil below in which soil organisms and organic matter occur sparsely because plants are so few.



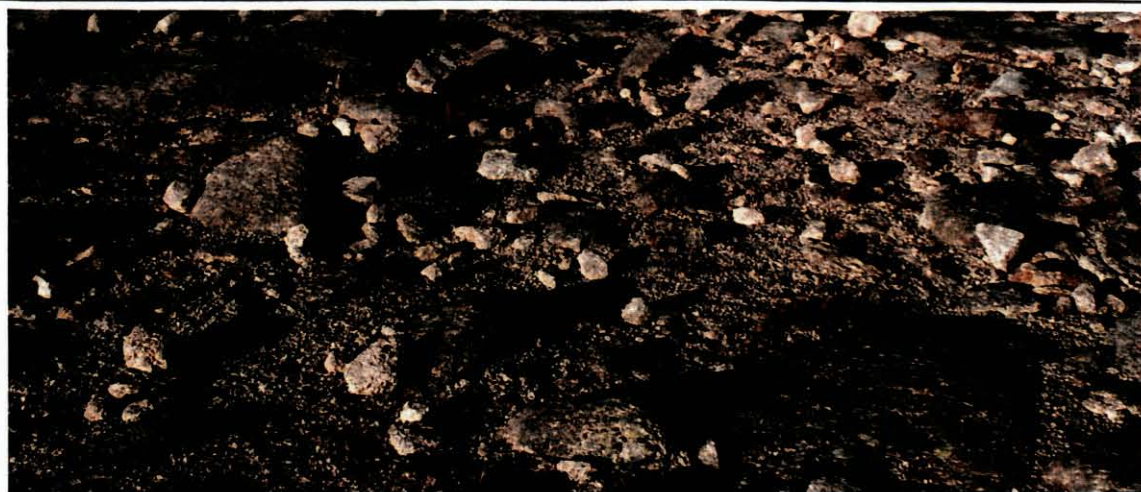


Figure 8 - Soils on the plateaux are at an early stage of development

On the moors and lower hills which generally overlay schist rocks, the plant cover is usually complete, resulting in the organic layer becoming much thicker. The acidity and washing out of minerals by water reduce the ability of soil organisms to break down material from dead plants, with the resulting accumulation producing a build-up of peat. On well-drained ground, peaty podzols occur, with a thin layer of peat over a hard reddish iron pan which forms a barrier to roots and water. In poorly drained hollows, thick peat builds up, to a depth of 3 m, covering vast tracts from 450-750m and some flat ground up to 900m. A similar but less peaty kind of podzol has developed under pine woodland, with less acid, browner soils without peat under birch woods.

### Ongoing Physical Processes

Post-glacial modifications of the landscape are widely represented by a variety of landform features, created by processes which continue to be active today. The vagaries of the Cairngorm climate may result in natural hazards occurring, such as landslides, avalanches and floods, leaving many slopes scarred by gullies and debris chutes.

Heavy snowfalls combined with complex air flow patterns increase the likelihood of avalanches. The effect of the avalanches are variable, but they can often sweep large areas of unstable debris into the corries and glens, forming extensive boulder tongues. The thin soils, steep slopes and largely impervious bedrock also channel rainfall rapidly into rivers and burns, causing rapid flash floods and often resulting in rivers changing the course of their channel, such as Luibeg Burn.

This dynamic character is further illustrated by periglacial activities on the upper slopes. Wind eroded surfaces and frost shattered debris create a series of distinctive landforms such as stone stripes and circles and wind patterning of vegetation.

## 2.3 HUMAN INFLUENCES

### Introduction

This section outlines the landscape impact of human exploitation of natural resources, both as a way of ensuring survival and for commercial gain. It considers the impact of agriculture on the development of natural vegetation; the effect of hunting and grazing



on vegetation distribution; and change brought about by forestry and built development.

The general basis of this section is that periods of demographic and sporting pressure on the countryside result in an impact on the appearance of the landscape, particularly in terms of the extent and character of tree cover.

### **The Prehistoric Period**

How early the area of Mar Lodge Estate was recolonised as the ice-sheets of the last glaciation down wasted about 10,000-13,000 years ago is uncertain, but analogy with the situation elsewhere in Europe suggests that hunters who preyed on the herd herbivores that existed in the tundra were often present. The amelioration of climate thereafter was accompanied by the appearance of a wider range of animal and vegetable food resources during the progressive establishment of woodland cover. These changes are likely to have witnessed the establishment of Mesolithic hunter-gatherer-fisher communities here, as elsewhere in Scotland. The presence of rivers and lochs, and the considerable altitudinal variation at the local scale within the Estate, may be surmised to have made portions of the landscape of considerable attraction to broad-spectrum hunter-gatherers whose way of life had a certain structure based on the natural cycles of salmon in the rivers and food and animals in the forests. It is likely that, on the basis of evidence elsewhere in Scotland, such communities would have been established here at least 8,000 years ago. Evidence for the passage of Mesolithic communities have been prospected in Deeside in particular, and, whilst these are better established in the area around Crathes, there are reports of related finds well up the glen.

The analysis of pollen content in loch sediments at sites close to the Estate indicates that progressive deforestation occurred during the later prehistoric period. The scale of this remains difficult to assess, as is the extent to which this resulted from natural processes or as a consequence of human intervention, through woodland clearance which encouraged the development of blanket bog. The remnant tree stumps emerging from the bogs of Glen Geldie, Bynack and Glen Geusachan indicate the former extent of the woodland cover. However, deforestation probably endured for several centuries during the last millennium BC, and was accompanied by the inwash of considerable quantities of nutrients into some lake basins, probably as the result of inefficient farming methods, contributing, along with worsening climate, to the degradation of soils. For the first millennium AD, cultivation, stock-raising, hunting and continuing use of the woodlands may all be assumed to have continued in the area, although the scale of these activities is unknown. However, given the general inhospitability of the area, its general altitude lying above 300m and flooding and river course changes, the opportunities for settlement and agricultural development can be considered particularly limited. As such, currently there has been no evidence discovered for pre-historic settlement west of Braemar.

### **The Historic Period**

The earliest archaeological evidence for human presence in the area is chronologically limited to the medieval and post-medieval periods, but is extensive in its extent for such an area. Most important are the remains of medieval and later townships and shielings, mostly confined to valley bottoms below 550m, although a few shielings and bothies exist in sheltered locations up to 690m. Permanent settlement and agricultural activity is restricted to lower terraces and haughs below 420m, lying on the main valley of the Dee, with no evidence of settlement above Inverey. This pattern filled out in the later

16th century but did not alter in its extent.

From the 15th century onwards, semi-independent Earldoms developed, of which Mar (encompassing the valleys of the Dee and Don and much of the intervening area) was one of the most prominent. Although depletion of the woodlands in the area probably continued throughout this period, through fire and clearances to accommodate small-scale agricultural extension, powerful landowners were anxious to maintain some degree of control over the woodland, not least because of its role in providing a habitat for game. Landowners could, as in the case of the Earls of Mar, make use of their feudal powers to achieve this. The Forest of Mar was a favoured hunting ground of the Royal House in medieval times, and the Earldom of Mar, when not under the direct control of the Crown, was normally strongly under its influence. Limited tree felling was allowed, as vassals had a right to remove timber for use in roofs and doors of buildings. However, lax supervision of this right led to felling for other purposes occurring and often the Estate had to bring vassals back into line in terms of their servitude rights. Families who were granted land in return from loyal service to the Earldom were allowed to fell timber for buildings and agricultural uses, but commercial exploitation was forbidden.

During the 15th century, whilst under the control of James II, Mar Forest was used as a run for wild horses, reverting to a hunting estate in 1565 when it was granted to Lord Erskine. The maintenance of hunting forest and chases may have helped limit over-exploitation of the existing woodlands but during the following centuries, considerable deforestation occurred.

### **The 17th - 18th Centuries**

At the start of the 17th century, the extent of woodland cover in the area can be envisaged by interpreting John Farquharson's 1703 map of the Forest of Mar (Figure 9). This map depicts the extent of woodland cover at this date and it can be reasonably assumed that, 100 years earlier, this extent would have been greater rather than smaller. This map acts as a key indicator of the extent of woodland loss in the subsequent centuries as a result of agricultural and settlement expansion, but also as a result of primarily commercial exploitation, agricultural and settlement expansion and, later, the formation of a dedicated sporting estate. Some evidence suggests that exploitation of the Forest of Mar may have begun around 1667.

Gradually, as the population grew and pressures on existing agricultural land increased, so expansion into the upper glens commenced, initially probably in Glen Dee (Figure 10). Farquharson's map also indicates settlements in Glen Lui but does not name them, suggesting that they were a relatively recent development. These crofts were located in areas where the practice of shieling was already established, and whilst some trees would have been felled, the areas would have been predominately open in character at that time. Grazing of cattle was controlled by limiting numbers on particular pieces of ground by establishing soumings (stock-carrying capacity of ground). Certain areas of the woodland were reserved entirely for hunting and no grazing was permitted. As grazing became more restricted and settlements expanded, the practice of shieling developed and became an integral part of the farming practice in the area. It was vital that animals were removed from areas capable of producing arable crops during the grazing season (26 May - 26 August), so allowing the in-by pasture to recover. This transhumance was a particular characteristic of farming in the area. This encroachment in Glen Lui, however, was seen by the owner of the estate, Lord Grange, as potentially harmful to the woods and had tenants cleared in 1726. By 1732, resettlement of these farms had occurred, possibly following timber extraction from the valley sides. Similar



Figure 9 - John Farquharson's Map of the Forest of Mar (1703)

patterns of clearance and resettlement occurred in the upper glens throughout the 17th century. Until the later part of the 17th century, farming co-existed in balance with the hunting and timber felling aspects of the woodland. Controls were also introduced by landowners to conserve the woodlands by restricting burning and the removal of timber for particular purposes. This limited the tenants' use of the woods, whilst at the same time allowing landowners maximum opportunity to exploit the woodland commercially.



Figure 10 - Remains of former settlements and farming practices in Glen Dee

## **Chapter 2**

# **EVOLUTION OF THE LANDSCAPE**





Throughout this period, timber extraction proceeded at varying paces and saw mills were established in the Quoich and Lui glens, possibly as early as 1695, along with sluices on the rivers. Timber exploitation gradually increased and accounts from 1776 indicate Glen Lui as only comprising of thousands of tree stumps on its hillsides, a significant landscape change since Farquharsons map of 70 years previous. Other accounts of this period describe evidence of extensive regeneration in Glen Quoich. Timber would be floated down the Lui and Dee, eventually with rafts being used after a mass of uncontrolled timber all but wrecked the new Ballater Bridge in 1809. The development of the railways and their need for timber sleepers helped continue the demand for timber into the 19th century.

John Thompson's map of 1826 (Figure 11) gives a very clear indication of the extent of woodland cover at that period, with no woodland shown in the upper section of Glen Lui, as the result of timber extraction. In association with Farquarson's map, these documents indicate the extent and pace of landscape change in this section of the Estate.



Figure 11 - John Thompson's Map (1826)

## The Age of Improvement

The earliest example of the 'improvements' which were carried out in the late 18th and 19th centuries was the clearance between 1763 and 1770 of the townships established on the haughlands around the newly named house of Mar Lodge, probably constructed in the 1760's on a site to the east of the current lodge (Figure 12). It would appear that the clearance was designed to improve the vistas in the environs of the lodge which was to be the principal residence of the Earl of Fife. This move was symptomatic of a trend towards order and efficiency typical of large estates at this time, and was probably accompanied over the following period by the planting of a diverse mix of trees around the lodge and in other scenic locations. Mar Lodge burnt down in 1770 and was rebuilt, modified and extended over many years. In the 1780s, the Earl of Fife leased the hillside of Creag an Fhithich to the south of the lodge, and planted trees to improve the view from the lodge. In 1785, he bought the whole hill.

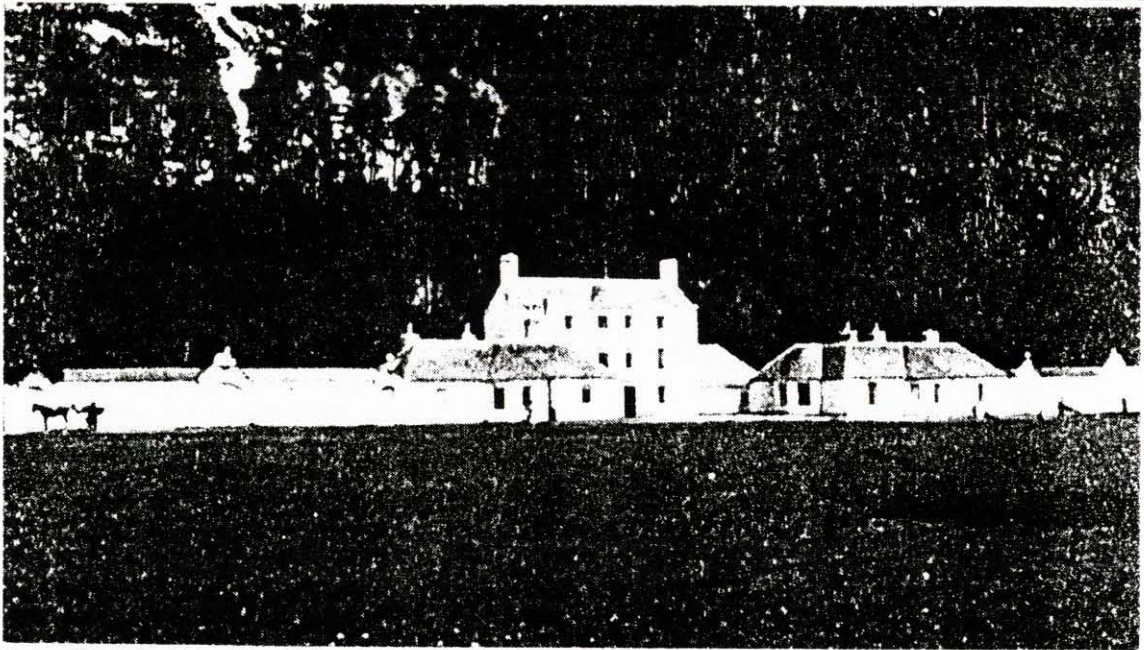


Figure 12 - The original Mar Lodge, built in the 1760s

At this time, there was also a movement towards greater agricultural order and efficiency, through tenants agreements which included the construction of stone buildings, the enclosure of common pasture, the straightening of ridges, control of muirburn and tree planting. These were practical improving measures, receiving positive comments in early 19th century Agricultural Reviews. However, the major consequence of these improvements was the forced removal of many tenants, with many communities being cleared to improve hunting or to turn land to grass. This all resulted in a considerable reduction in population during the later 18th and early 19th centuries and as such, large areas of pasture land became available. This was subsequently let to sheep-farmers and commenced a short-lived phase of sheep dominance on the Estate, which lasted until the mid 19th century when hunting again regained dominance. The arrival of sheep farming was another contributory factor to the general reduction in woodland cover during this period.

Fortunately, the Estate escaped what would have been one of the worst excesses of memorial building on Scottish hill tops in the 19th century. This was the Earl of Fife's plan, described in 1819 in *The Caledonian Itinerary*, to build a sepulchral pyramid 100ft



high on the summit of Ben Macdui, with a burial vault inside.

The main haughlands at Allanaquoich and Inverey would have been subject to the improvement techniques to increase their arable production, although most of this arable land would have been swept away in the 'Muckle Flood' of August 1829. These areas would have produced oats, barley and potatoes, some of which could also have been grown at up to 400m. The ancient passes through the Estate, the Lairig Ghru and the Lairig an Laoigh, would also have been used at this time by drovers taking black cattle from Northern Scotland to trysts in Falkirk and Crieff, with the Lairig Ghru still in use as late as the 1870's.

The medieval practice of hunting within the forests had all but died out by the end of the 18th century, partly due to the traditional nobilities forfeiture of their estates after the 1745 Jacobite Rebellion and the subsequent widespread felling of the woodlands which began at Mar Lodge in earnest in the 1750's. However, commercial exploitation of timber was quickly demoted, probably as early as the 1830's, in favour of deer stalking across open moorland, which was rapidly increasing in popularity and financial importance. As open moorland became the premium land-use and deer numbers increased, it is likely that natural regeneration of the native woodlands ceased about this time. It was this almost continuous process of timber removal followed by browsing out of subsequent natural regeneration which resulted in such a significant reduction in the extent of the Mar Lodge woodlands from their original extent. This pattern differs greatly from other estates where the greater timescale between timber exploitation and establishing deer stalking allowed considerable regeneration to take hold. With the decline of sheep farming in the second half of the 19th century, the area of deer forest expanded, allowing deer populations to increase further.

In 1847, the Ordnance Survey set up a trigonometrical station on Ben Macdui and the ruined remains of the surveyor's stone hut still lie just east of the summit.

Following damage to the original Mar Lodge and its gardens by the 'Muckle Flood', the Earl of Fife moved to Corriemulzie Cottage (Figure 13) now outwith the current Estate boundary, standing on the wooded slopes of Creag an Fhithich. This cottage was renamed Mar Lodge, with the original lodge being referred to as Old Mar Lodge on the Ordnance Survey 1st Edition Map of 1869 (Figure 14).

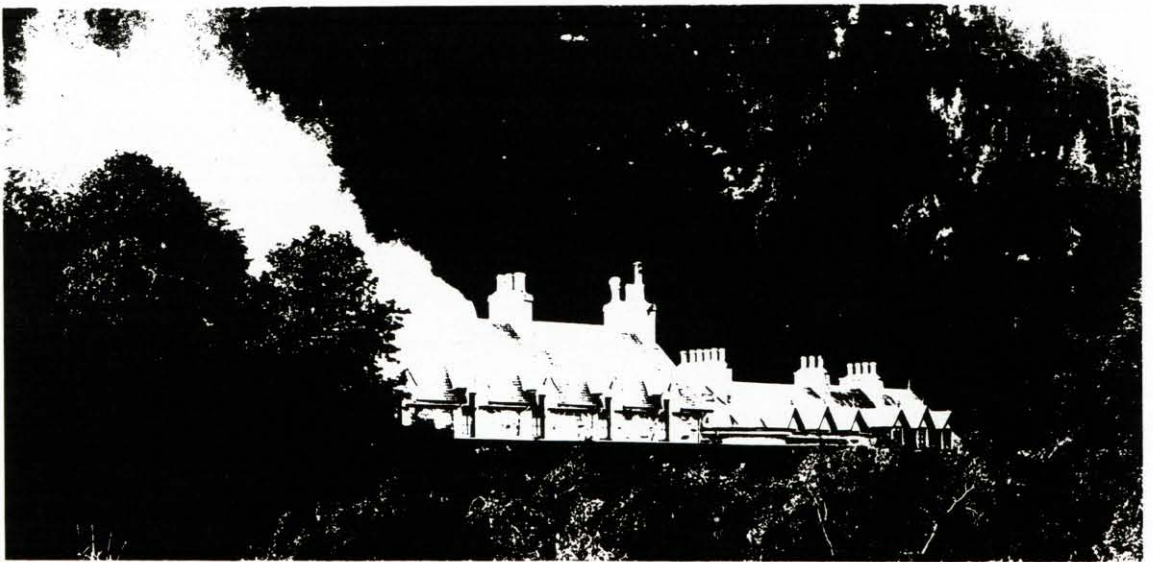
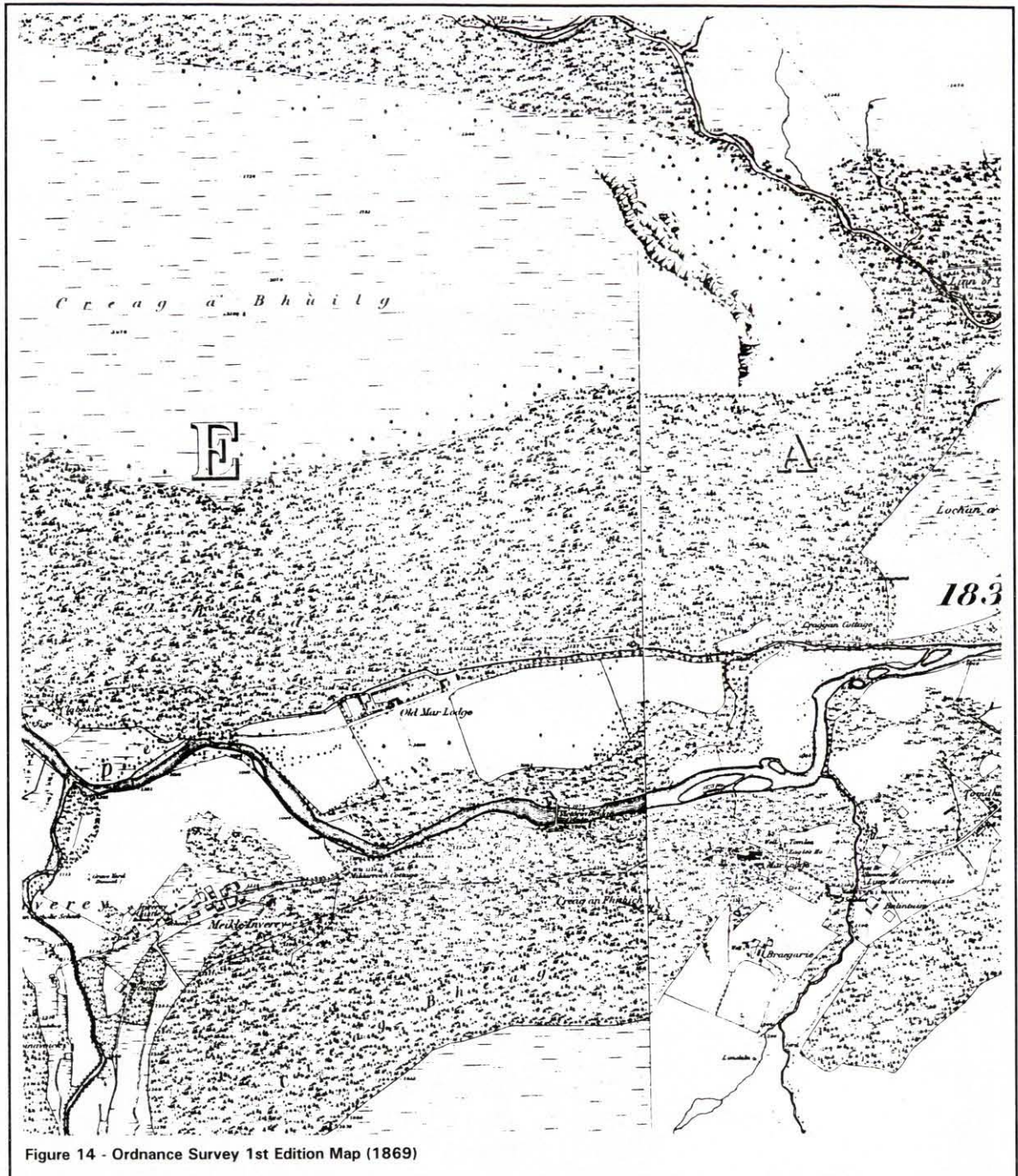


Figure 13 - New Mar Lodge at Corriemulzie

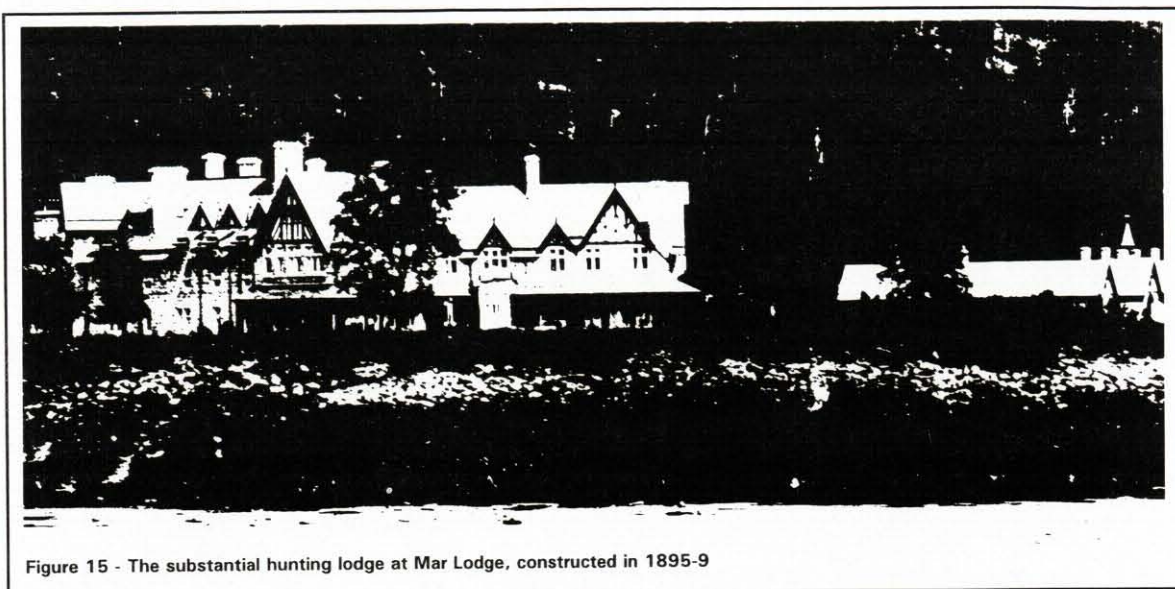




The significance of shooting to the Highland economy increased and was accompanied by the creation of increasingly sumptuous lodges in which to accommodate the hunters, often with additional designed features in the landscapes around them. The nearby Falls of Corriemulzie were rendered more picturesque by the planting of specimen trees in their vicinity. Following New Mar Lodge being destroyed by fire in 1895, the Duke of Fife's high Victorian Mar Lodge in Old English half-timbered style with red roof tiles was built in 1895-9 on a site to the west of Old Mar Lodge and is grander than its predecessor (Figure 15). The foundation stone was laid by Queen Victoria and the Lodge was built for her grand-daughter, Princess Louise, the Duchess of Fife. A number of shooting lodges were constructed in remote glens, as increasingly the sporting resources of the Estate were developed to the utmost. Also, the freeing of further ground from sheep



allowed the development of grouse moors in the south of the Estate.



### The 20th Century

Since the mid 19th century, some new conifer planting was undertaken. This process has continued through the early and mid 20th century and has redeemed some of the decline in woodland cover exacted in the 1750's - 1830's. The Ordnance Survey 3rd Edition Map of 1921 indicates various fenced enclosures in Glen Dee and Glen Lui (Figure 16). However, whilst the overall extent of woodland cover has not changed significantly as a result of this since about the 1890's, the composition of these woodlands has considerably altered. The use of more non-native conifers at higher stocking densities and in more organised and controlled areas of land have led to a reduction in the intricate pattern of glades and diversity of ground vegetation associated with native woodlands. In the last 30 years, large areas of plantations have been planted primarily for deer shelter reasons, but also having some longer term commercial potential. Many of these plantations have resulted in a legacy of forest plantings which are often poorly scaled and shaped in relation to the remaining remnants of native woodland or the general landscape character of the area and will, in the longer term, lead to an unnaturally structured woodland.

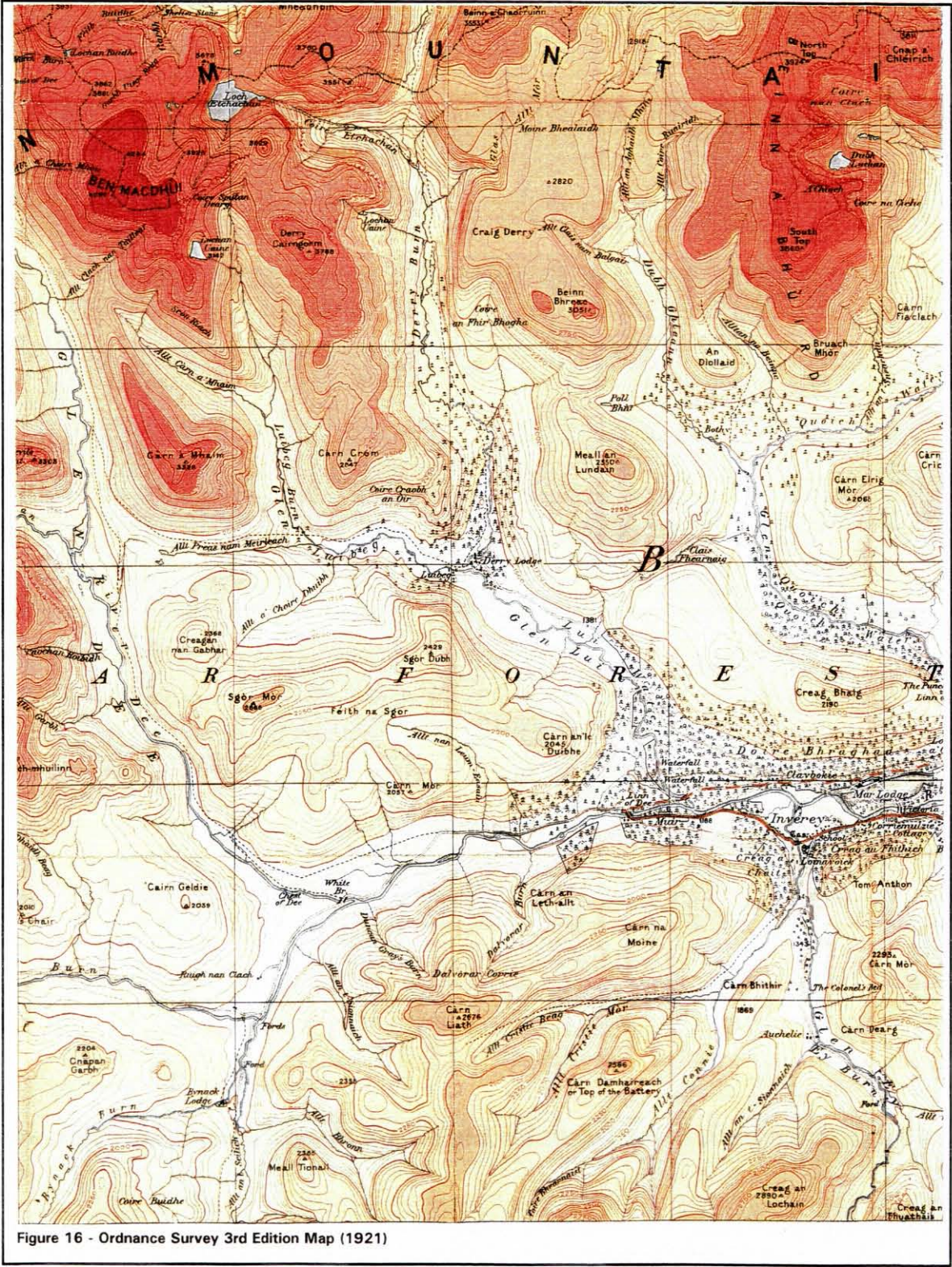
Continuing commercial exploitation of woodlands also continued, particularly during and immediately after periods of war, resulting in further reductions in the extent of native woodlands. Some of these areas have subsequently been replanted with pines grown from seed collected on the Estate or fenced to encourage natural regeneration.

During the 1930's, the ground between the Lodge and the north side of the Dee was used as a private golf course, having excellent turf. An attractive formal garden existed between the Lodge and the Stable Block with formal box edges and an intricate parterre style layout, probably being laid out in the late 19th century. The garden would also have produced fruit and vegetables for the residents of the Lodge.

In association with increasing forestry activity and hill farming use and to assist access for stalking, a series of constructed access tracks were established, penetrating into some of the most remote sections of the Estate. An access track was also constructed



leading close to the summit of Beinn à Bhuird in connection with a prospective skiing development planned by two Swiss brothers, who aimed to turn Mar Lodge into a major ski centre, with tows emanating from behind the Lodge. Due to a significant lack of snow during the first few years, the plan was abandoned. These man-made features have been accompanied by other small-scale elements such as bridges, signs and small buildings although, on the whole, 20th century built development is generally absent from the area.





## 2.4 CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS

### Introduction

This section explores some of the cultural associations which have been connected with Mar Lodge and its locality. It considers travellers' accounts of the area, together with literary and artistic associations, and in particular the association of Queen Victoria with Royal Deeside. Photography and folklore of the area are also included, as well as the development of mountaineering, where perceptions of the landscape as offering a physical challenge produces a distinct, but not entirely different, cultural emphasis.

The remoteness and unchanging character of the Cairngorms in terms of both their landscape and their culture has impressed many visitors over the centuries. One of the greatest experts on the Cairngorms, Seton Gordon, believed the principal qualities of the Cairngorms to be their emptiness, the extensive views from them, and their rapidly changing and extreme weather conditions. These factors are all recurrent themes in depictions, both literary and artistic, of the area. More recently, the entry for the Cairngorms in *Collins Encyclopaedia of Scotland* (1994) notes "Their extent (c. 300 sq miles) and elevation, ... flora and fauna ... and recreational facilities ... are distinctly more exciting than their profiles. Even the four summits over 4000ft are literary nonentities compared to Scott's Trossachs, Ben Lawers or Schiehallion."

### Early Travellers' Accounts

One of the earliest accounts of a visit to the Mar Lodge area comes from the pen of John Taylor, the 'Water Poet' (born 1580). Wyness has described him as "Deeside's first 'tourist' to write an account of his visit to the valley". Taylor was invited to Deeside as a guest of the Earl of Mar, and later published an account of his experiences, under the title, *The Pennyless Pilgrimage* (1630). Taylor stayed at Doldencha, on the site of present day Braemar Castle, arriving after "extreme travel, ascending and descending" in the "Brae of Marr". He was most impressed with the height and steepness of the surrounding hills, observing "mount Benawe, with a furr'd mist upon his snowie head instead of a nightcap, for you must understand, that the oldest man alive never saw but the snow was on the top of divers of those hills, both in summer, as well as in winter." (quoted by Hume Brown, 1891). He also noted the abundance and quality of the pines in Mar and watched the Earl of Mar's hunt.

Thomas Pennant passed north through the Glen Tilt-Glen Feshie route to Braemar on his way to Aberdeen in 1769. In his *Tour in Scotland* (1771) he comments, of the pine forests of Braemar (reached after crossing what he described as "dreary wastes"):

"Some of the trees are of a vast size: I measured some that were ten, eleven and even twelve feet in circumference (4ft diameter)... the prospect above these forests is extraordinary, a distant view of hills over surface of verdant pyramids of pines" (Pennant, 1770).

Pennant also wrote of "the naked summits, many of them topped with perpetual snow". In her *Companion and Useful Guide to the Beauties of Scotland* (1810) the Hon. Mrs Murray Aust rode through the Lairig an Laoigh and advises "all travellers in search of uncommonly fine scenery not to omit visiting every part of the district called Braemar, the charms of which have hitherto been unheard of, and unseen, except by the very few".

The Reverend Archibald Anderson, of Cathie and Braemar noted that by 1843 (in the *New Statistical Account*), the Linn of Dee, upstream from Inverey "where the river is confined for a number of yards between two rocks in so narrow a space, that some persons have been hardy enough to step across it. This natural curiosity ... much visited and admired by strangers ...." was where Byron as a young man almost lost his life.

As the number of published accounts of tours of the area increased, accompanied by Government investigations into the Highlands which raised the profile of the area, so the potential number of visitors increased. The first guide specifically devoted to the mountains themselves appears to be that of George Fennell Robson (1814), republished with coloured plates five years later. The forty plates include 11 of the Cairngorms. *Scenery of the Grampian Mountains* was not matched by a true mountaineering guide for half a century (Alexander, 1938).

### Literary Influences

The late eighteenth century saw the development of the multiple concepts of the "picturesque", most associated with William Gilpin, whose observations on the Highlands were published in 1792. These added another dimension to the search for scenery and, henceforth, the sublime, the picturesque, and the beautiful, all required to be considered by the discerning tourist, only in due course for the distinctions amongst them to be lost. By the late eighteenth century, an agenda for Highland visits had been clearly set. Robert Burns described his tour of 1787 in a letter thus: "I have done nothing else but visited cascades, prospects, cascades and Druidical temples, learned Highland tunes and picked up Scotch songs, Jacobite anecdotes etc, these two months" (quoted by Andrews, 1989).

However, other early 19th century commentators, notably Sir Walter Scott's friend, John MacCulloch, whose four volume *The Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland* was published in 1824, based on his own travels, displayed a readier appreciation of the realities of Highland landscape as perceived by the inhabitants of the area, as opposed to the aristocracy, wealthy members of the bourgeoisie, or inquisitive intellectuals:

"If a Highlander would show you a fine prospect, he does not lead you to the torrent and the romantic rocky glen, to the storm-beaten precipice or the cloud-capt mountain. It is to the strath covered with hamlets and cultivation, or to the extended tract of fertile lowlands, where the luxuriance of vegetation and wood depends on the exertions of human labour" (quoted by Withers, 1992).

The development of the fascination of outsiders with Highland scenery and landscape coincided with the decline, through clearance and other economic processes, of much of the agrarian component of these landscapes.

Great 19th century poets such as George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788 - 1824) drew inspiration from the Ossianic legacy, but also knew the landscape. Byron was closely associated with the Cairngorms, for as a fatherless and ill boy of 9 or 10 he had recuperated at Ballaterich house in Deeside, under the shadow of "Morven of Snows" and "Lachin y Gair" (Lochnagar), and was again in the area in 1803 ; both poems were published in *Hours of Idleness* (1807).

Romanticism was a strong element in the makeup of early 19th century literature and art, and the Highlands offered landscapes which engendered emotion and imagination and brought the visitor close to nature. Highland traditions, in a sanitised and peaceful

form, began to reappear in the Cairngorm area, largely as a result of the influences mentioned above.

### Artistic Associations

Landscape views of the Highlands abounded in the 19th century, having been relatively rare in the preceding century. Horatio McCulloch (1805 - 67) was amongst the most influential artists in the creation of the Victorian image of Highland landscapes, and crossed the country widely, carrying out his painting on the spot. The landscapes of Deeside have remained popular subjects for artists into the present century. The work of Joseph Farquharson, R A (1846 - 1935), Laird of Finzean on Deeside, may stand as an instance of this. In many ways a traditional painter, he was especially renowned for his canvases of sheep in snow, leading to his nickname of "Frozen Mutton". His early work, such as *Misty Glen*, shows an interest in the effects of atmosphere on distant views. Farquharson's work enjoyed considerable popularity in middle class milieux, more particularly as a result of the large editions of prints of it which were produced.

Charles Grey, ARHA was a friend of the Earl of Fife and Edward VII and did much painting in the Braemar area. His son, Alfred, was also a painter and was commissioned by Queen Victoria to paint a number of scenes around Mar Lodge, including one in Glen Quoich which she considered to be very good.

The artist Sir Edwin Landseer is probably the most prominent Victorian artist associated with the area. The background for his most famous work, *The Monarch of the Glen*, is a view of the Cairngorms as seen from Inverey (Figure 17).



Figure 17 - *The Monarch of the Glen* by Sir Edwin Landseer

Willie Forbes, formerly head stalker at Mar Lodge Estate, is one of the few contemporary artists who still follows the Victorian tradition of painting stalking scenes, inspired by the Deeside moors and hills and his interest in shooting and fishing. One of his major themes is to catch the instant when wildlife suddenly notices the hunter, capturing the frozen moment in time which remains in the hunters mind. He is also a noted taxidermist.

## Royal Endorsement

The young Queen Victoria was most impressed with Scott's historical novels, and after several visits to Scotland, the Prince Consort leased Balmoral Castle, largely because the scenery was strongly reminiscent of his native Thuringia, and the weather was noted to be drier than further west. The Royal family enjoyed not only deer stalking and fishing, but also tours through the mountains on horseback. Queen Victoria later published her diaries from her Scottish sojourns (*Leaves from the Journal of Our Life in the Highlands*). Of Linn of Dee, she states 'On the bridge, Lady Fife received us, and we all drank in whisky "prosperity to the bridge". The view of the Linn is very fine from it.'

In September 1852, Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort attended a romantic torchlight ball at New Mar Lodge. Highlanders carrying torches surrounded a dance board where three Highlanders danced a reel holding torches accompanied by seven pipers. Queen Victoria described this as "a beautiful and most unusual sight". In 1857, Queen Victoria opened the new bridge at Linn of Dee which replaced a wooden bridge. Before the construction of the wooden bridge, the only way to get across was by a precarious plank - or by jumping!

In October, 1859, Queen Victoria made an ascent of Ben Macdui. Ascending via Glen Derry and Loch Etchachan, her description contains some fascinating insights into Victorian perceptions of the landscape and its appearance at that time. Glen Derry is described as 'very fine, with the remnants of a splendid forest' and she refers to the track as being 'broken up by cattle going down for the Tryst', implying the Lairig an Laoigh was still in use for droving. Coire Etchachan is described as being 'a very wild rugged spot, with magnificent precipices', and there are references to other wild hills and corries. Having ascended almost totally in mist, on the summit of Ben Macdui, the mist cleared to reveal 'the grandest, wildest scenery imaginable!', a view she also describes as 'splendid' and 'well worth seeing'. Queen Victoria considers the view as having a 'sublime and solemn effect; so wild, so solitary - no one but ourselves and our little party there'.

In September 1861, Queen Victoria and party also visited Loch Avon via Glen Derry and the Lairig an Laoigh which she describes as 'a dreadfully rough, stoney road, though not steep but rougher than anything we ever rode upon before, and terrible for the poor horses' feet'. She considers of the sight of Loch Avon - 'nothing could be grander and wilder - the rocks are so grand and precipitous, and the snow on Ben Muich Dhui had such a fine effect'.

Within half a century, popular guide-books to the area (eg Eyre-Todd, 1895) would have titles such as "In the Queen's Country", for their accounts of this area.

The Royal enthusiasm for Deeside encouraged a more widespread interest in Highland sport (ie shooting, stalking, and fishing) than ever before. Ironically, Albert himself was indifferent at both shooting and fishing. However, he enjoyed some success with a Leister spear on occasions, when up to a hundred gillies, some kilted, drove the Dee salmon towards nets and the Prince's spear. The Braemar Gathering was once held at



Mar Lodge, and attended by the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) who arrived late.

## Photography

The developing art of photography nudged into the background 'painting in the heather' which effectively ended with the death of Queen Victoria.

Victorian tourists often came to the Cairngorms area with the intention of viewing famous beauty spots and from this trend in landscape appreciation, there grew a large trade in souvenir albums and postcards. These were mass produced by companies such as G. Washington Wilson of Aberdeen and Valentine of Dundee, and were also used as the basis of the line illustrations which illustrated accounts like that of Eyre-Todd (1895: e.g. Linn of Corriemulzie (Valentine's); and Linn of Dee (G W Wilson & Co)). For the Victorians, views of spectacular waterfalls, eg Linn of Dee, or buildings tended to be more popular than people - largely because they were easier to achieve for the photographer with his primitive equipment and lengthy exposures. Photographs also in due course influenced artistic output: Farquharson's *The Winding Dee - My Heart is in the Highlands* of 1890 (with its title echoing the Burns' song) is likely to have been influenced from this source, although also from Japanese prints.

The Royal household also commissioned photographs directly from Washington's studio, not only of members of the family itself (the famous photograph of Queen Victoria on her garron, Fyvie, its reins held by John Brown, is a Washington Wilson product), but also post dated records of some of Queen Victoria's expeditions. Subsequently, records of royal visits and hunts were more usually photographic, including a grouping of the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII) with his house guests outside Derry Lodge. The formal poses of Queen Victoria in the landscape presage the more informal photographs of recent decades taken by Princess Margaret's former husband.

More recent landscape photography, such as that carried out by Colin Baxter, (Figure 18) often portrays the unusual weather conditions of the Cairngorms and focuses on specific landscape features, such as the Caledonian pinewoods and birch woodlands of the area.



Figure 18 - Glen Dee and the Lairig Ghru - a postcard by Colin Baxter



## Folklore

The folklore of the Cairngorms is very rich, and is intimately associated with Gaelic place names. The Gaelic language was once universal in the area, but steadily declined from the late 18th century. The situation in the parish of Crathie and Braemar in 1842 was described as follows in the *New Statistical Account*: "The gaelic is very generally spoken throughout the whole parish, and during the summer months, is used in conducting part of the public worship... there are, however, very few if any of the inhabitants, who are not so well acquainted with the English language, as to be able to converse and transact business in it when necessary."

By the 1920s, the survival of Gaelic in Deeside was restricted to the older people in Mar. The Gaelic dialects in the Cairngorms are not considered to be at all 'classic'. Gaelic place names were given to the smallest details of the landscape, particularly in areas where the much-romanticised practice of taking cattle to high pastures was carried out and the farming families dwelt in shielings. In some areas, Gaelic place names relate to the presence of extensive forests, where none now survive.

The most famous legend of the Cairngorms concerns the Big Grey Man (Am Fear Liath Mor), a giant spectre who reputedly haunts the top of Ben Macdui. Professor N J Collie, a well known Victorian scientist and mountaineer, once stood alone on the summit and heard footsteps in the snow as if someone was accompanying him. He became so scared that he ran fleeing from the summit. Many others have had similar experiences, particularly one Aberdeen climber, on leave during the mid-1940s who emptied his army revolver into one particularly menacing shape of mist! Several legends connected with Celtic missionaries, eg St Monire and St Nathalan are connected with upper Deeside. A less well known legend concerns the attempt of the men of Mar to cut a trench in order to divert the waters of the Tilt into the Dee. The attempt was unsuccessful, for they were attacked by the men of Atholl, who prevailed in the battle which ensued.

The name of Coire Bhrochain on Braeriach commemorates an episode involving cattle being taken through the twin passes of the Lairig Ghru (Lairig Chruidh or pass of the stirks) and Lairig an Laoigh (pass of the calves). The cattle strayed up the mountainside and subsequently plunged en masse to their deaths over the cliffs of the corrie, which was named Coire Bhrochain (corrie of porridge) from the crushed cattle.

The Gaelic poets often dwelt upon the rapidly changing weather in the course of journeys through the Cairngorms, such as in the following:

"Cuir is cathadh am Bealach Dearg  
Sneachd is reoth air Charna Bhalg  
Cul ri gaoth air Lairig bhealaich  
Ghrian gheal am Maoilinn"

"Snowing and drifting in Bealach Dearg  
Snow and frost on the Cairnwell  
Back to the wind on the Lairig pass  
Bright sun in Moulin."

(Watson, *Cairngorms*)

Particular landscape features are often held to have associations with the unseen world of spirits. A widespread idea in the Cairngorms is of the fairy hillocks, small mounds which were the abode of the little folk. Such features are found, for instance, in Glen Lui, near the Black Bridge.

On Carn Crom, there is an ancient solitary pine tree called Craobh an Oir (tree of the gold). An old legend tells how a Mackenzie of Dalmore buried a stolen crock of gold there, and later moved it to near the top of Cairn Geldie.

The healing powers associated with the Well of Mary (Tobar Mhoire) at Inverey, were held to be remarkable and could be enhanced by dropping a pin into the water. This well is associated with the legend of St Monire, reputedly the first Christian Saint to have penetrated Upper Deeside.

## Mountaineering

The underlying premise behind this activity is that man is appreciative of landscape as something against which to pit physical strength and personal expertise in the pursuit of an understanding of his own depth of character and personality under arduous conditions. In the Mar Lodge area, the development of this pastime is generally characteristic of the last quarter of the 19th century, although the main thrust of activity has occurred since the Second World War. The Scottish Mountaineering Club was founded in 1879, with the Cairngorm Club being founded in 1889.

In 1810, G S Keith climbed Braeriach and Cairn Toul, and made one of the earliest recorded Scottish climbs, the ascent of the Dee Waterfall in Garbh Choire Dhaidh.

There are numerous accounts of individual feats of endurance simply traversing the Cairngorms. Professor William MacGillivray, author of the *Natural History of Deeside and Braemar* (1855) recounts he walked homewards to the Hebrides in 1819, stopping to sleep near the foot of Braigh Riabhach, before continuing next morning straight out of the corrie westward.

Around the turn of the century, several climbs were established in Coire Bhrochain on Braeriach, followed by sporadic development throughout the inter-war period, mostly gully climbs in summer and winter. However, it was the post-war move out from the gullies and onto the intervening buttresses that resulted in a spate of activity which raised climbing standards considerably. This post-war development in the climbing grounds of the Estate has been achieved almost exclusively by Aberdonians.

In the 1950's, the main activists in the area were Bill Brooker, Mac Smith, Tom Patey and Kenny Grassick, members of the 'Kincorth Club' who pioneered many routes on Coire Sputan Dearg and Creagan à Choire Etchachan. Some of these climbs were the hardest routes in the Cairngorms at the time and remained major test pieces for almost a decade. Mac Smith published a Climber's Guide to the Cairngorms in 1961. This group would generally base themselves at Bob Scott's bothy at Luibeg, where tales of epic battles on the mountain sides would be told in front of roaring log fires and plans made for more adventures. The bothy attained almost mythical status in the climbing community, largely due to the affable Bob Scott, the stalker at Luibeg Cottage who, unlike most stalkers, showed friendship and generosity to most climbers and walkers, despite a general lack of understanding of why they wanted to climb. The bothy burnt down in March 1986.

A further rise in standards came in the 1960's with a new group of climbers known as 'The Spiders' which included John Bower and Ronnie Kerr. The early 1970's also saw a further burst of activity by the Etchachan Club at Sputan Dearg and Coire Etchachan before the publication of Greg Strange's guide to the area in 1973. Strange, along with Dougie Dinwoodie, Brian Laurie and others raised technical climbing standards to match anywhere else in the country. Climbing development in the Cairn Toul - Braeriach amphitheatre was much slower than elsewhere on the Estate, largely due to its difficulty of access. Until the building of the Garbh Coire bothy by the Aberdeen University Lairig Club in 1967, most climbers would use Corrour bothy, originally built in 1877 to house

a deer watcher in summer: the last watcher left in 1920 and the building became an open bothy. A visitors book kept in the late 1920's/early 30's was testimony to its popularity but, by 1938, it had become delapidated as vandals used its wood panelling for firewood. In 1950, the Cairngorm Club restored the bothy.

The Mar Lodge area remains a popular destination for hill walkers and climbers and has played an important role in the development of Scottish mountaineering. Many of those who gained their initial climbing experience in the area have gone on to make major contributions to the raising of climbing standards in the Cairngorms, elsewhere in Scotland and abroad.

**Chapter 3**  
**LANDSCAPE CHARACTER**





### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The landscape character of a particular location derives from the combination of natural features, physical processes and the activity of man. This combination produces a variety of different Landscape Types which can be considered as having a common and distinct character based on their major topographic and vegetation characteristics. The more detailed combination of landform, vegetation type and pattern, drainage, land-use and settlement patterns create coherent areas of distinctive character referred to as Landscape Character Areas, which are subdivisions of Landscape Types.

Much landscape assessment work has already been undertaken for the Cairngorms Working Party Study Area Landscape Assessment Study. The Mar Lodge Estate Landscape Assessment draws on this wider study and considers in more detail and at a larger scale the landscape character of the Mar Lodge Estate.

This section begins by describing the general landscape character of the Cairngorms Working Party Study Area and places the landscape character of the Mar Lodge Estate within this wider context. The landscape character of the Estate is defined into four broad Landscape Types, based on the major topographic and vegetation characteristics previously identified in the Cairngorms Working Party Study Area Landscape Assessment Study. These Landscape Types are then each subdivided into more detailed Landscape Character Areas, based on an examination of more subtle variations in landform characteristics or differences in vegetation cover/type or settlement pattern. Where Landscape Types and Landscape Character Areas extend outwith the Estate boundary, this is noted, particularly where the visual inter-relationship between the Estate and adjacent properties is an important characteristic of the landscape.

The boundaries of these Landscape Types and Landscape Character Areas should not be considered as definitive, but rather representative of gradual transition zones between areas exhibiting distinctive combinations of different landscape elements. In many areas of Mar Lodge Estate, there is a strong visual inter-relationship between many of the Landscape Character Areas so that each cannot be entirely separated from those which surround it.

### **3.2 THE CAIRNGORMS CONTEXT**

The Cairngorms Working Party Study Area forms one of the most notable mountain environments in Britain. The juxtaposition of broad granite plateaux, surrounding moorland and native forests, extending over such a wide range of altitude, and the diverse straths and glens of farmlands and settlements is a key characteristic. The area exhibits one of the fullest expressions of the ecological continuum in the Central and Eastern Highlands of Scotland, where the inter-relationship of geological and geomorphological processes, combined with associated vegetation zones and related wildlife, can be so fully experienced.

The Cairngorms are recognised as the most extensive area of high mountain habitat in Britain, and provide a strong sense of remoteness, largely as a result of the wide expanse of sparsely populated hills and glens to their south and east. This remoteness, combined with altitude, the roughness of the terrain, the immense scale of the whole scene, and the general absence of man's influence and presence, contributes greatly to the area's wild land qualities.

It is the totality of the mountain environment on such an extensive scale, deriving from the spaciousness of the high plateaux with their rocky corries and deep cut glens contrasting with the surrounding texture and colour of the moorlands and pinewoods, leading to the more managed, humanised straths, which makes the Cairngorms such a diverse and distinctive landscape.





The juxtaposition of plateaux, forests and straths is a distinctive characteristic



Corries form deep incisions into the bare plateaux



Native woodlands extend throughout the surrounding glens







The elevated plateaux are surrounded by extensive moorlands and woodlands



Upper Deeside comprises a cultural landscape of woodlands, policies, pasture and buildings



The expansive, open glens and moorlands of the south-west of the Estate





### 3.3 MAR LODGE ESTATE

The landscape of Mar Lodge is representative of the range of different landscape types typified by the Cairngorms. The diversity of the Estate's landscape, and the wide range of landscape elements which contribute to this diversity, is a major characteristic of this section of the Cairngorms.

The northern section of the Estate is characterised by elevated plateaux with deep corries and glens, and contains four of the six highest mountains in Britain. This area represents one of the last tracts of wild land areas in Britain, where the vast scale of the scenery is a dominant feature. The southern section of the Estate represents a more managed, cultural landscape, comprising wooded glens, moorlands and the partly settled upper section of Deeside, all of which contrast with the backdrop of the high plateaux. This area retains elements of its development as a leading 19th century Highland sporting estate, including extensive heather moors, remnant native woodlands, high deer populations, Mar Lodge itself with its remnant policies and three remote, ruined shooting lodges.

Mar Lodge Estate covers four of the Landscape Character Areas identified in the wider, small-scale Cairngorms Working Party Study Area Landscape Assessment Study. These Areas are the Central Massif, the Southern Hill Ranges, the North-Eastern Hill Ranges and the Deeside Estates. These four Landscape Character Areas have formed the basis for the identification of Landscape Types on the Estate. These Landscape Types are (Figure 19):

- The Plateaux
- The Southern Moorlands
- The Wooded Glens
- Upper Deeside

Each Landscape Type is described and illustrated, highlighting its key characteristics and elements. These Landscape Types are then sub-divided into more detailed Landscape Character Areas (Figure 20) which are also described and illustrated, emphasising the often subtle differences which make each of the character areas distinctive.

### 3.4 THE PLATEAUX

Extending over the northern section of the Estate, the plateaux contain part of the highest range of mountain landscape in Britain. Here, the underlying granite contributes greatly to the character of the area, in terms of the resultant landforms and the appearance of the rock cliffs and ground surface. Despite containing some of the highest mountains in the country, the height of the plateaux is less immediately obvious than its immense mass. The broad, sweeping, undulating plateaux, with their groups of gently rising summits, the large convex shoulders and slopes bulging steeply into trough-like glens and the general vastness of the scale, all contribute to the overwhelming sense of enormity and mass of the area. The edges of the plateaux are glacially sculpted by deep, rock-strewn corries, which frequently contain large-scale, blocky rock cliffs and dark lochans. In places, waterfalls plunge from the plateaux edges over rock slabs whilst, elsewhere, long, smooth slopes sweep into high, remote glens.

The bare, roughly textured ground comprises boulder fields, scree, and gravel slopes on a vast scale, and is intermixed with an intricate mosaic of sub-arctic, ground hugging mosses, lichens and liverworts. The area is generally devoid of trees, with only the occasional dwarf willow in sheltered areas.

The general uniformity of the plateaux levels and open nature of the ground allows extensive panoramas in all directions, creating an expansive, open landscape of unimpeded views to distant hill ranges and spectacular glimpses into adjacent deep glens and corries.

The most popular mountains and glens contain well-worn footpaths with associated cairns, footbridges and Scottish Rights of Way Society signs. There are three mountain refuge huts in the area, as well as several vehicular access tracks which, in places, extend onto the upper slopes where they are highly visible. These man-made elements contrast markedly with the strong wild land quality of the area, resulting from the combination of remoteness, altitude, stillness, roughness of terrain and the sense of closeness and intensity of exposure to nature. The wild land quality is further increased by the harshness of the climate, where the elements work with a power not known at lower altitudes, and where snow covers much of the area for many months of the year. All these features have led to the area forming the training ground for many top-class mountaineers.

The Landscape Type of the plateaux extends considerably beyond the Estate boundary to Glen Feshie in the west, to Cairn Gorm and Loch Avon to the north and Ben Avon to the east. This Landscape Type can be sub-divided into four distinct Landscape Character Areas:

- Beinn à Bhuid
- The Macdui Massif
- Cairn Toul/Braeriach
- Lairig Ghru/Glen Derry



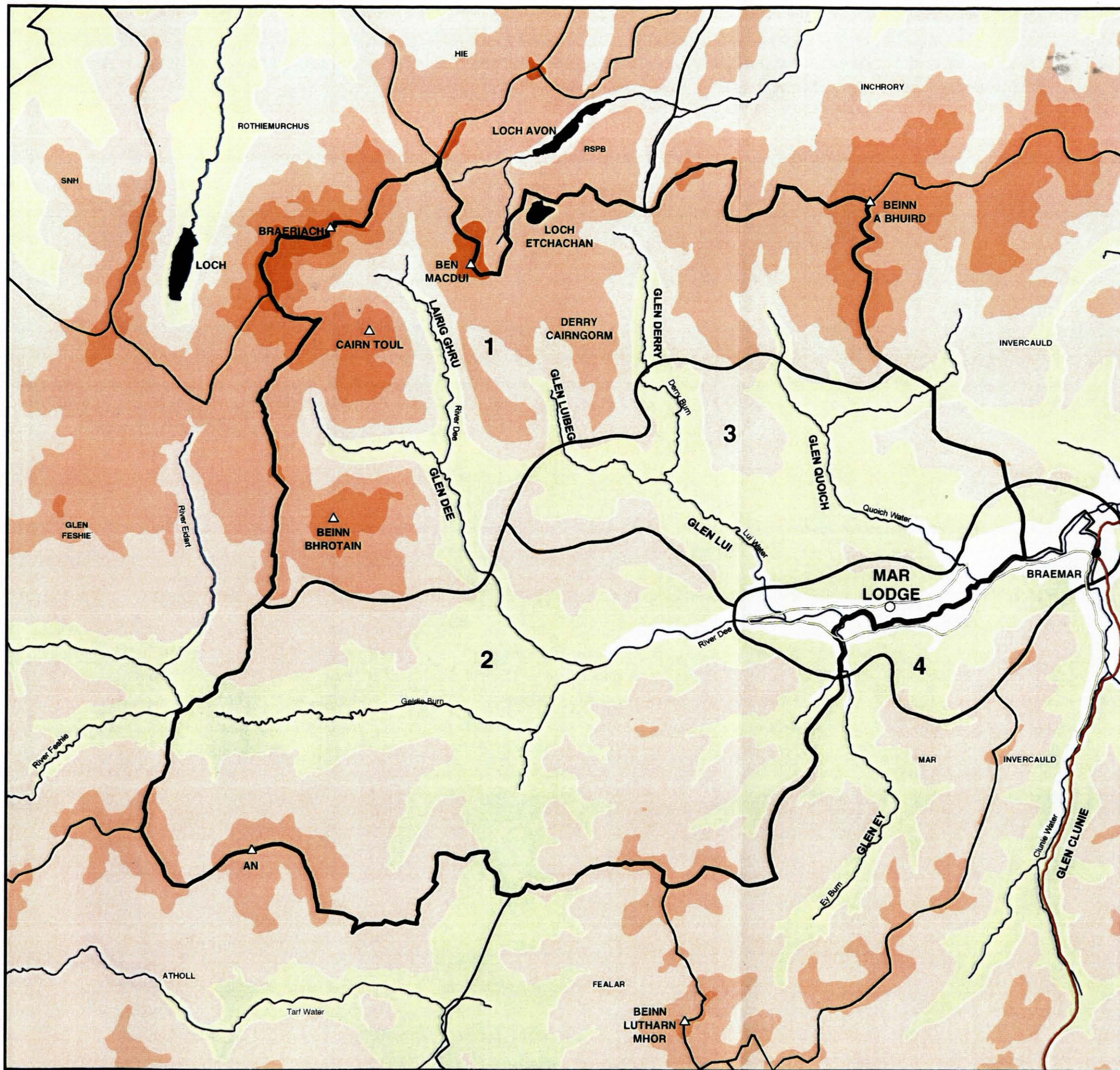


Figure 19

## Landscape Types

### Legend



Estate Boundary

1. The Plateaux
2. The Southern Moorlands
3. The Wooded Glens
4. Upper Deeside



### Scale

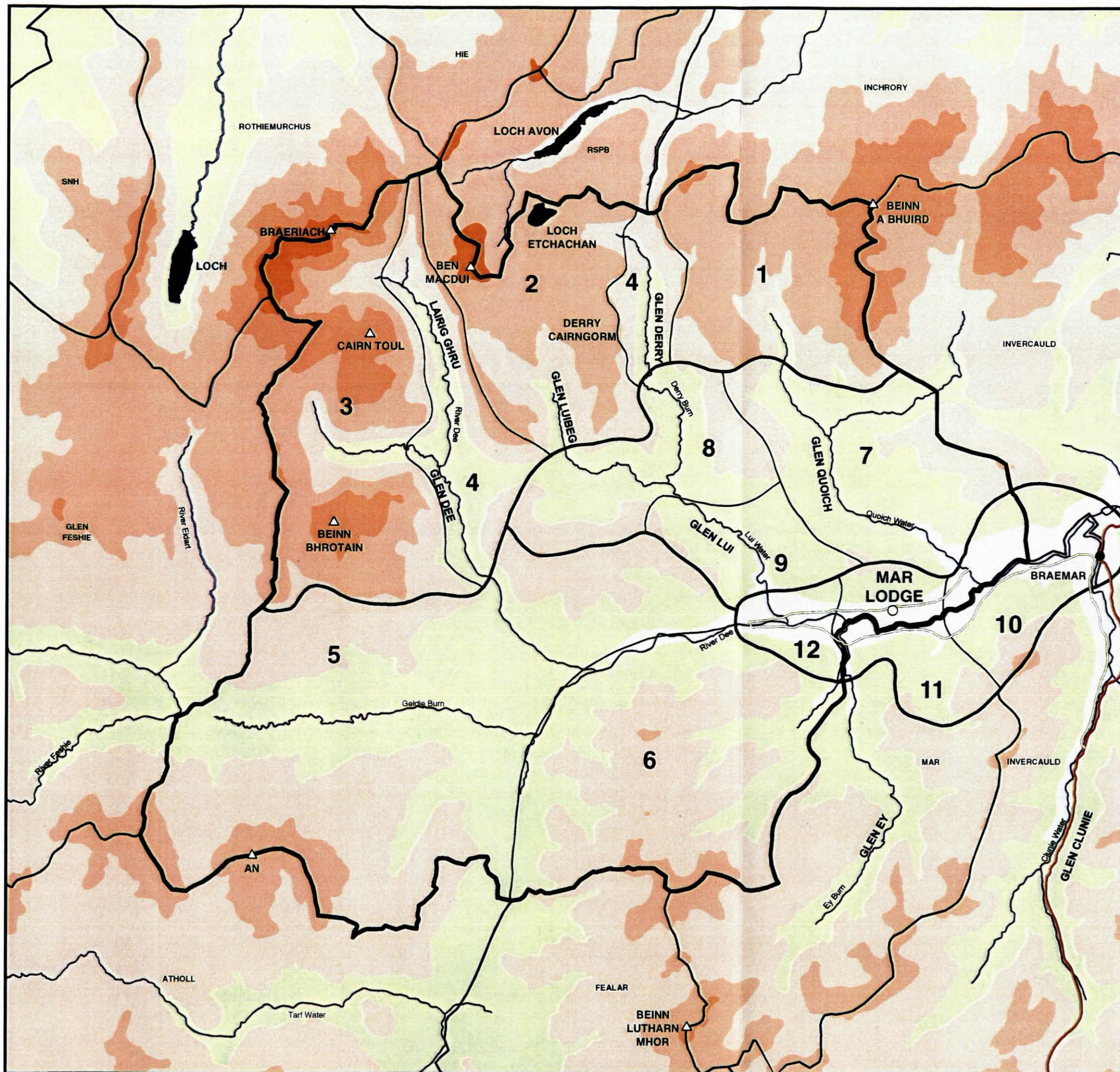


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**Figure 20**  
**Landscape Character Areas**

**Legend**



**The Plateaux**

- 1 Beinn a' Bhuid
- 2 The Macdui Massif
- 3 Cairn Toul / Braeriach
- 4 Lairig Ghru / Glen Derry

**The Southern Moorlands**

- 5 Geldie
- 6 Dalvorar

**The Wooded Glens**

- 7 Quoich
- 8 Derry / Lui
- 9 Lui

**Upper Deeside**

- 10 Allanaquoich Haughland
- 11 Mar Lodge Policies
- 12 Linn of Dee



**Scale**



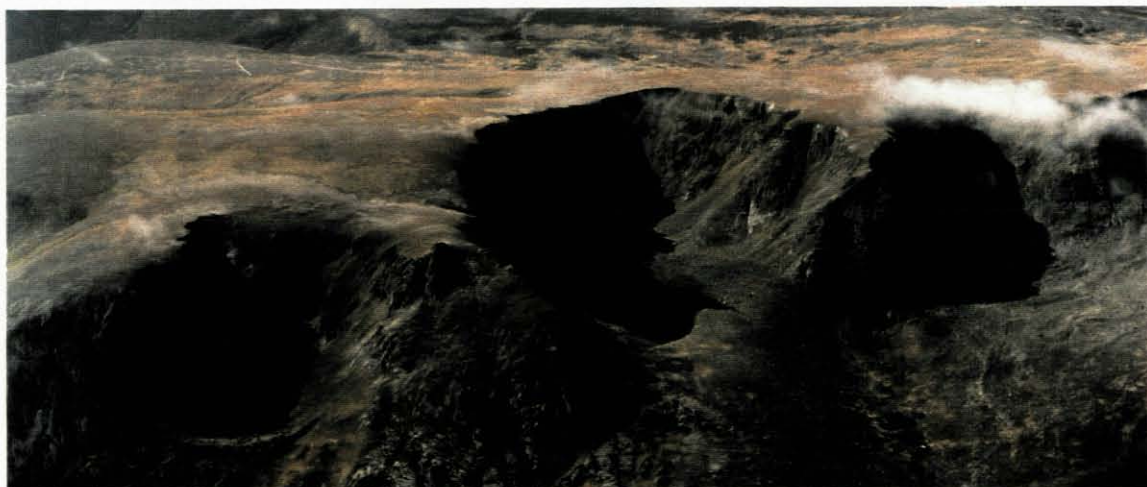
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The immense scale and mass of the undulating plateaux with its trough-like glens



Deep ice-gouged corries create dramatic edges to the plateaux



The overall sense of barrenness of the summits



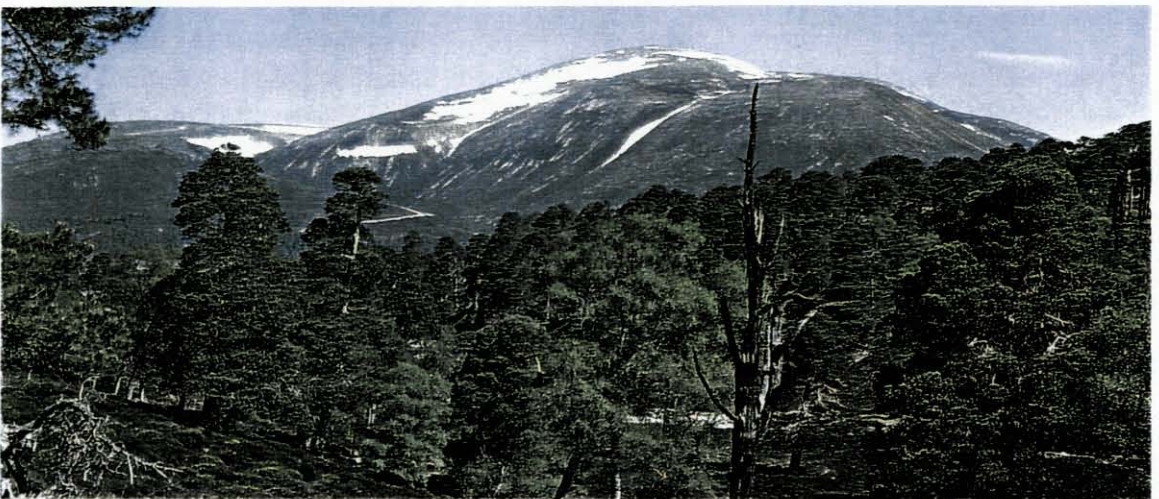




Deep corries penetrate into the expansive, undulating plateau



A bulldozed access track forms a prominent feature on the southern shoulders



The immense bulk of Beinn à Bhuird dominates the upper sections of Glen Quoich





## Beinn à Bhuird

Beinn à Bhuird comprises a huge massif, containing the highest summit in the Eastern Cairngorms and one of the highest stretches of ground over 1000m in Britain. It includes the high and medium level plateau stretching eastwards from Glen Derry and which continues northwards and eastwards outwith the Estate to Glen Avon and Ben Avon. As such, Beinn à Bhuird visually dominates much of the north-eastern section of the Estate.

From the south, Beinn à Bhuird appears as an enormously bulky hill range, comprising huge rounded, smooth, convex slopes and shoulders which sweep steeply into the upper reaches of Glen Quoich. However, on its eastern side, immediately beyond the Estate boundary and unseen from most of the Estate, lies a series of deep, craggy and snowy corries. The flat summit plateau is formed by great windswept tracts of granite grit, short grass and mossy turf. Many of the southern slopes exhibit stepped terracing of alternate vegetation and gravel. In hollows, extensive carpets of arctic-alpine grassland occur.

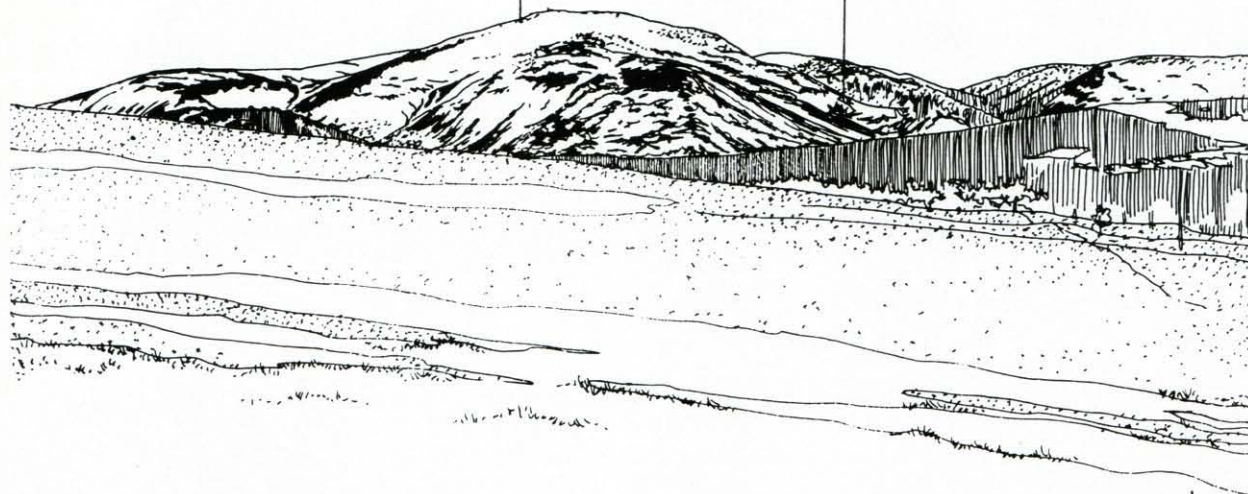
The North Top of Beinn à Bhuird provides some of the most extensive views in North-East Scotland, extending to the north-east and east over a multitude of rolling foothills and glens to the Buchan coast.

Although Beinn à Bhuird is amongst one of the less-frequented of the higher hills in the Cairngorms, the sense of remoteness which this often instills is, however, significantly reduced by a bulldozed access track on the prominent shoulder of An Diollaid and which extends close to the summit level. This track, which takes a series of spectacular zig-zags, forms a major visual feature of the southern aspect of Beinn à Bhuird, due to its contrast of geometry and colour with the adjacent hill slopes.

To the west of Beinn à Bhuird, vast heathy slopes lead to the peaty tableland of Moire Bhealaidh, a great flattish expanse of bog, peat hags and innumerable small pools. These slopes terminate in the rounded summits of Beinn Bhreac and Beinn à Chaorainn, and the hillsides leading into Glen Derry.

BEINN À BHUIRD VISUALLY DOMINATES  
THE NORTH-EAST SECTION OF THE ESTATE  
& PROVIDES EXTENSIVE VIEWS OVER  
NORTH-EAST SCOTLAND

BROAD, ROUNDED CONVEX SHOULDERS  
OF GRAVEL, SCREE & MOSSY TURF  
FALL STEEPLY INTO SURROUNDING  
GLENS ON SWEEP TO ADJACENT  
TABLELAND PLATEAUX





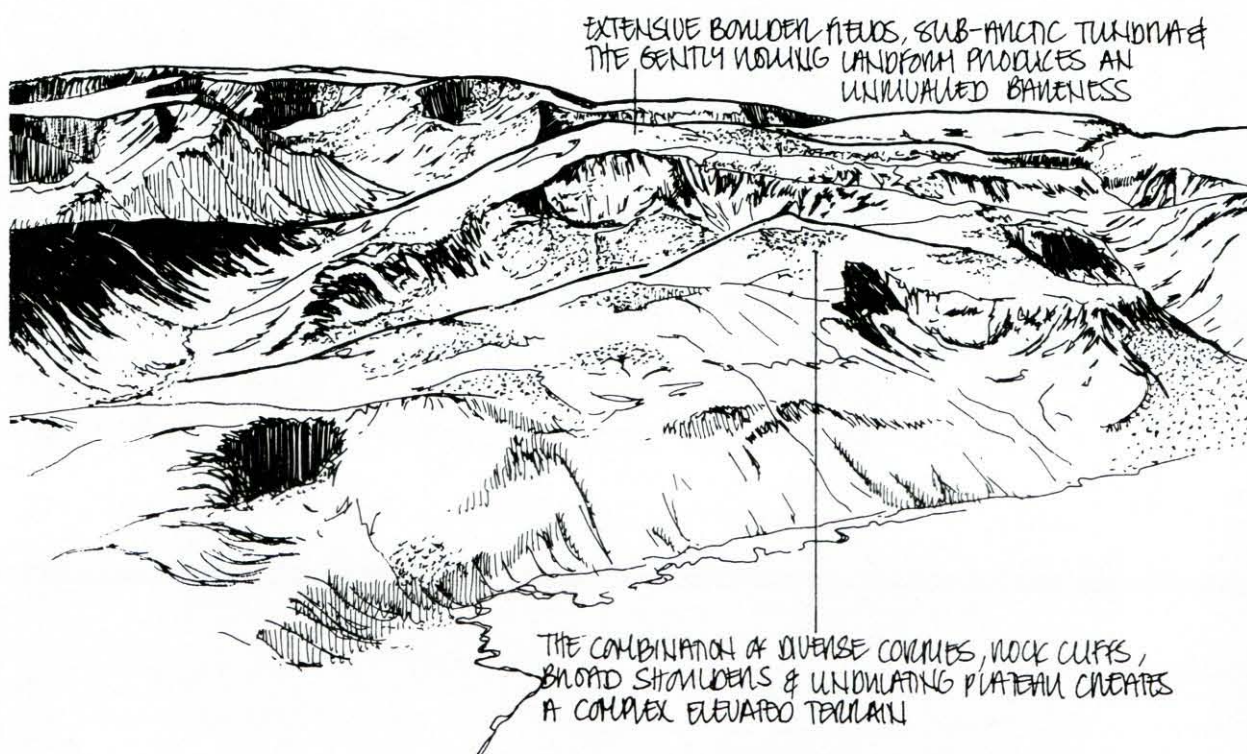
## The Macdui Massif

The Macdui Massif forms a rampart of particularly elevated terrain extending between the Lairig Ghru and Glen Derry and continues northward outwith the Estate to Cairn Gorm and the Loch Avon basin. Ben Macdui forms the second highest mountain in Britain and its surrounding hills, whilst much lower than Macdui, are still amongst the highest in the country.

The area is unique in Scotland, comprising part of the biggest and most varied tract of sub-arctic tundra in Britain. Extensive boulder fields cover much of the higher altitudes, producing a bareness of terrain, with wide mossy flushes around the braided streams, stone stripes and polygons common on the flatter ground. There is a very rich snow-patch vegetation.

To the east and south-east of Ben Macdui, a series of individual corries cut into the plateau, creating a complex terrain of broken crags, bulging shoulders and vast boulder slopes, with many hollows where snow lingers long into the summer. The corrie scenery here is diverse, with the sunny, sheltered Coire Sputan Dearg, with its dark red buttresses standing out boldly against old snow in the gullies, contrasting with the east facing, bold straight face of granite and huge sweep of crimson slabs of Creagan à Choire Etchachan. Streams from the plateau plunge via waterfalls into these corries, which also contain a fine set of high level arctic-alpine lochs and lochans. In contrast, the western side of Ben Macdui comprises a series of continuous sweeping bouldery slopes and shoulders extending into the Lairig Ghru.

On the summit of Ben Macdui, an indicator, built in 1925 by the Cairngorm Club, describes an extensive panorama extending 150km to the Lammermuirs and Caithness over extensive ranges of hills and glens. The summit is a popular destination for walkers, particularly from the Coire Cas car park to the north, despite its remote and elevated location. The summit and slopes of Ben Macdui particularly to the north, contain wide eroded paths with many cairns, and a large number of stone built bivouac walls are evident near the summit. Other visually prominent footpaths also exist in the area. The Hutchison Memorial Hut, a metal and stone mountain refuge hut in Coire Etchachan, forms one of the few man-made elements in the area.







The elevated corries and boulder fields of the Macdui Massif



Diverse corrie scenery surrounds the plateau edge



Broad shoulders plunge into boulder-strewn corries and glens







A series of interconnected corries create an extensive and abrupt edge to the plateaux



Broad shoulders of extensive boulder and scree slopes lead into the Lairig Ghru



The vast amphitheatre of interconnected corries cuts deep into the plateau



Cairn Toul/Braeriach

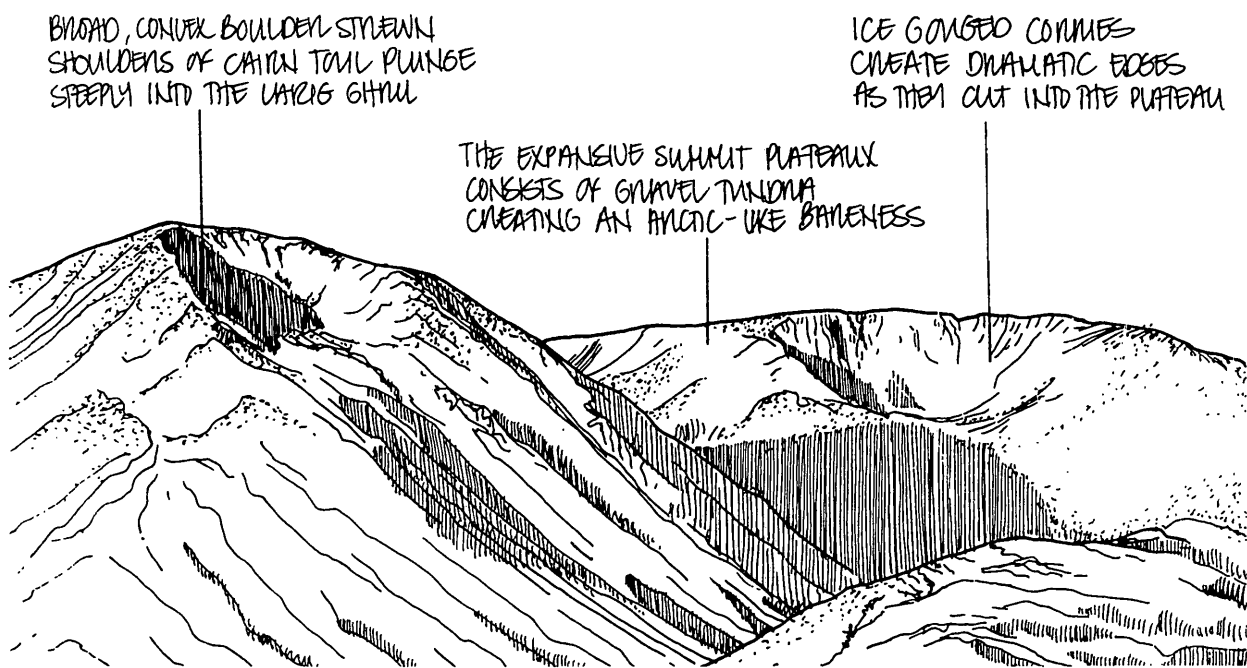
Comprising a vast swathe of high plateau along the north-western side of the Estate, lying west of the Lairig Ghru, Cairn Toul/Braeriach is backed by a gently westward sloping tableland of blanket bog extending beyond the Estate boundary to An Moine Mhor above Glen Feshie.

The area forms a crescent-shaped range of massive hills with bulging, convex shoulders, many corries and a large summit plateau. The area creates a sense of vast scale, due to its huge expanses of gravelly flat tundra, arctic-like barrens and complete bareness. Cairn Toul, though, is by far the sharpest of the high Cairngorm hills and forms a shapely, conical peak when seen from the south-east. To the south of the main plateau, the outlying hills of the Devil's Point, a striking headland above the Lairig Ghru, Monadh Mor and Beinn Bhrotain contribute greatly to the character of the area. In An Garbh Choire and Glen Geusachan, extensive 'hummocky' moraines create distinctive features.

The eastern edge of the plateau comprises a vast amphitheatre of continuously inter-connected corries stretching over 6km. Here, throughout the winter, 'crevasses', 'bergschrunds' and enormous cornices form due to the vast abundance of snow which accumulates in the corries. The Garbh Coire Mor contains Scotland's most permanent snow field, having only fully melted twice this century. In late spring, however, the buttresses, bare of snow and separated by snowy gullies, rise above unbroken snowfields, creating a truly alpine atmosphere. Snow lingers so long in the area that lichens have failed to colonise much of the virgin granite.

In the centre of the plateau, the infant River Dee rises at a small spring, at an elevation of over 1200m, before cascading over the plateau edge down rocky slabs to the corrie floor. Here, it runs a subterranean course among huge boulders to be joined by the waterfall flowing from the clear green waters of Lochan Uaine below Cairn Toul.

Being less frequented than Ben Macdui, the area has escaped much of the recent effects of man. The scars of bulldozed vehicle tracks have been avoided and cairns and footpath erosion are less prominent. However, the footpath leading from Corrour Bothy towards Cairn Toul is badly eroded. A small mountain refuge hut is located in An Garbh Coire, but is predominantly covered in boulders. The area therefore retains a strong sense of remoteness and wild land quality.



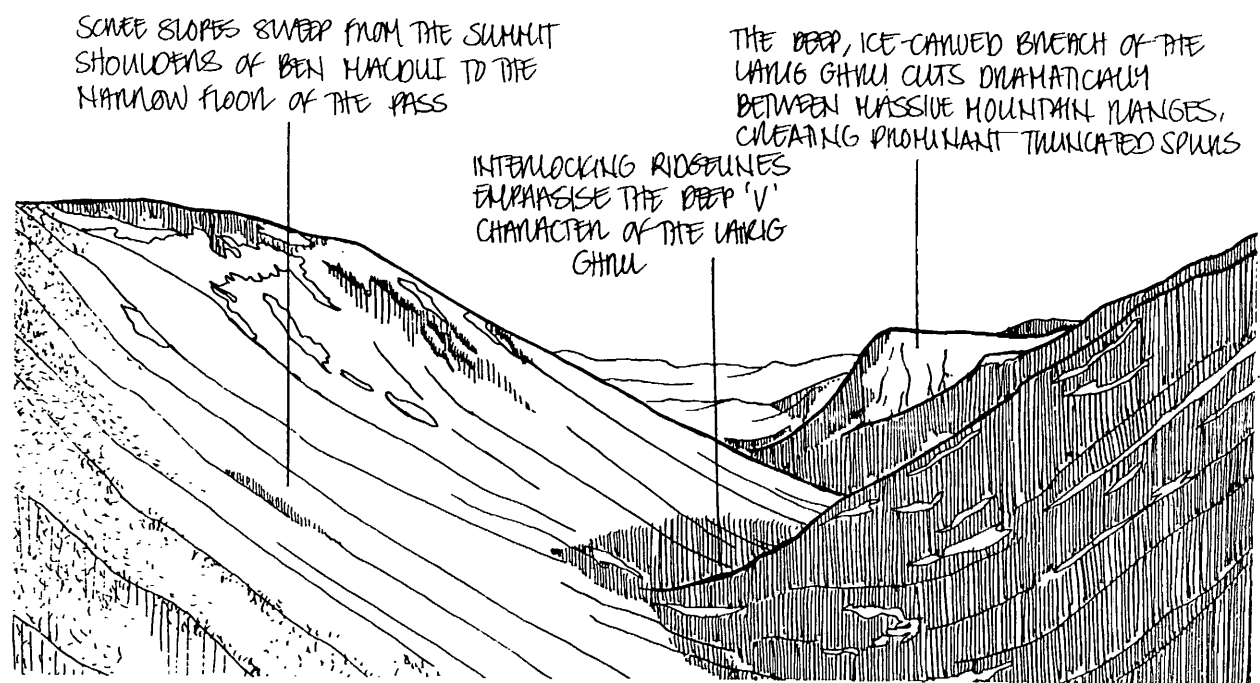


Lairig Ghru/Glen Derry

These deep glacial troughs form major north-south breaches through the plateaux and contain two of the four Rights of Way within the Estate linking Deeside and Strathspey.

The Lairig Ghru is one of the best known mountain passes in Scotland. It carves a deep 'V' between the great masses of Ben Macdui and Braeriach, penetrating through the very heart of the Cairngorms. In its lower reaches, at the junction of Glens Dee, Luibeg and Geusachan, it forms a broad, flat-bottomed glen, with a series of moranic deposits forming hummocks, predominantly covered with peat bog, grassland and boulders, and hemmed in on all sides by steepening hillsides. The rocky projection of the Devil's Point dominates this section of the glen, whilst opposite, the slopes of Carn à Mhain have been rent by massive debris flows. Further north, the slopes of Ben Macdui rise in a continuous unbroken sweep of reddish scree and boulders to the skyline, contrasting with the series of interlinked corries cutting deeply into the Cairn Toul/Braeriach plateau. Gradually, the glen floor narrows and begins to rise over increasingly stony ground until, near the narrow summit of the pass, the ground becomes rough with boulders. The crest of the pass provides extensive framed views along its length to Glen Dee and Strath Spey, and violent winds often funnel through this narrow section. A well-worn footpath with many cairns runs along the east side of the River Dee which meanders across the glen floor, being fed by numerous mountain streams. There is a small stone and aluminium mountain refuge hut at Corrou, with a bridge over the river. Footpaths around Corrou are particularly prominent features of the area.

Lying east of the Macdui Massif, the upper section of Glen Derry leads into the Lairig an Laoigh pass and is characterised by a distinctive flat, relatively straight valley floor . The valley floor is covered with grass, heather, and occasional mature native pines and contains the gently meandering Derry Water and three fenced enclosures containing some small-scale pine regeneration. The heather-clad hillsides rise gently and smoothly, giving way to scree and boulders on the upper rounded shoulders, whilst small stands of native pines pepper the lower slopes. Northwards, the valley floor narrows and rises to the junction with Coire Etchachan, and is dominated by the triangular-shaped broken crag of Stob Coire Etchachan. Extensive 'hummocky' moraines form a striking feature of Upper Glen Derry. Whilst the adjacent hillsides visually contain the glen, its open character allows extensive views along its length. A vehicle access track penetrates along the eastern side of the glen, becoming a well-worn footpath as the glen narrows.





Sweeping scree slopes define the narrow upper section of the Lairig Ghru



The rugged, bouldery ground near the summit of the Lairig Ghru



Glen Derry's distinctive flat floor contrasts with the surrounding hillsides and summits

### 3.5 THE SOUTHERN MOORLANDS

This Landscape Type occupies the south-western section of the Estate and extends considerably outwith the Estate boundary to the west and south. The area comprises an expansive, remote, rolling heather and grass upland. A vast series of smooth, rounded hills, with broad ridges and mostly gentle slopes, merge with wide, open glens. The general uniformity of the summit levels is a distinctive feature of the area, as is the generally rounded shape and arrangement of the hills and glens, and the lack of rocky outcrops, boulders and scree.

This is an expansive landscape of long vistas and extensive panoramas, with seemingly endless horizons and wide skies, which is emphasised by the predominance of an intricate mosaic of grassland and blaeberry moorland covering much of the ground. In late summer, the heather colours whole hillsides in a warm purple pink. The area also contains small, bright green, mossy flushes of sphagnum. Many of the peat bogs also contain old tree roots indicating the former extent of tree cover in the area. Now, in the lower reaches of the area, small-scale geometrically shaped coniferous plantations occur, which provide little diversity in species composition and density of tree pattern. The gentle landform pattern has been lightly dissected by numerous burns which gradually join to form wide and fast-flowing rivers.

The area is totally unpopulated, which increases its sense of remoteness and wild land quality. In Glen Dee, there are archaeological remains of pre-clearance farming communities, whilst the ruined stone built former shooting lodges of Geldie and Bynack are evidence of the area's former prominence as a 19th century sporting estate.

This Landscape Type can be sub-divided into two distinct Landscape Character Areas:

- Geldie
- Dalvorar





An expansive rolling upland of rounded hills and broad open glens



The smooth amorphous landform is emphasised by the heather/grassland mosaic



"A strong sense of remoteness and solitude"

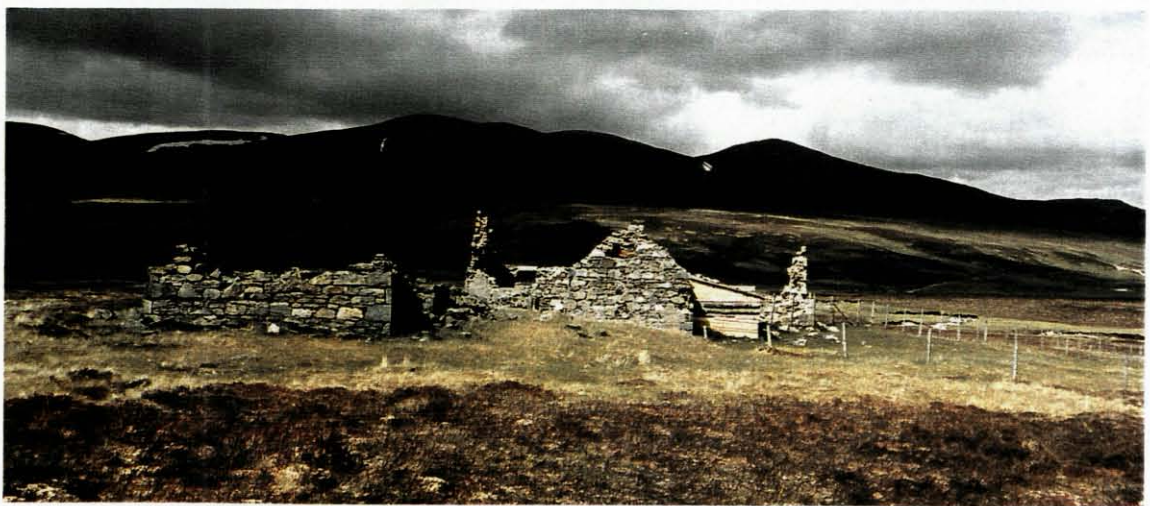




The high plateaux rise above the rolling moorlands and glens



An expansive open landscape of smooth, gentle slopes



The ruined shooting lodge at Geldie is located in a remote, wild setting





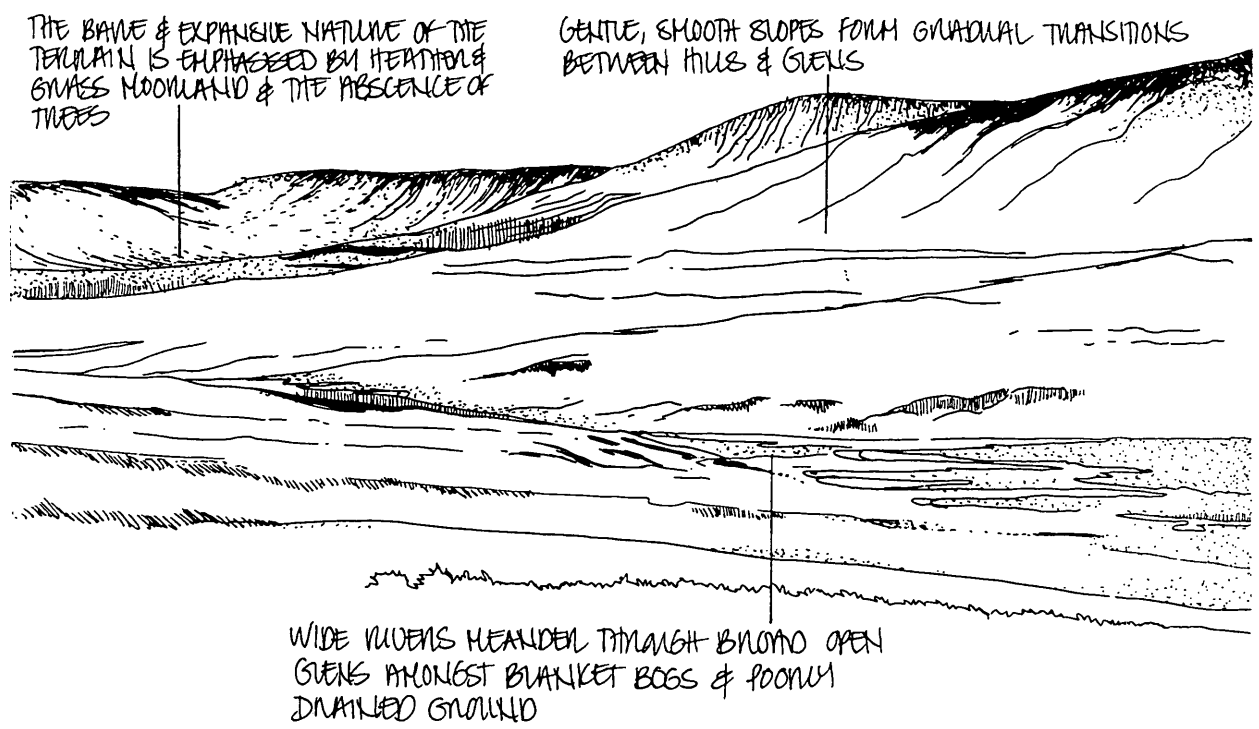
**Geldie**

This vast area extends north and westwards from the main Dee/Geldie/Upper Glen Tilt glen and continues outwith the Estate boundary westwards to the upper reaches of Glen Feshie and southwards to the extensive range of hills and glens of Atholl and Fearnach.

The area is characterised by an expansive, open landscape of gentle, smooth, lightly dissected slopes leading to broad, rounded summits. The landform pattern is particularly simple in its arrangement, with very gradual transitions between glens and hillsides and between ridges and shallow corries. In the south of the area, the landform becomes somewhat steeper, with the Estate boundary forming a prominent skyline. To the north, the high plateau of Beinn Bhrotain visually contains the area whilst, to the west, there are extensive vistas and panoramas to upper Glen Feshie.

The glens comprise an intricate mosaic of upland grassland and heather, with much poorly drained ground and blanket peat bog. On the slightly drier upper slopes, heather becomes the predominant ground vegetation. The lower southern slopes of Carn Mor contain small scree areas and rocky outcrops, but this is uncommon throughout the area. Several small-scale geometric coniferous plantations occur on the lower slopes of Cairn Geldie and Carn Mor, which have a poor visual relationship with the expansive and open character of the landscape. The glens contain wide, fast flowing rivers which meander gently and are fed by vast headwaters.

Vehicle access tracks penetrate deep into Glens Dee and Geldie, extending onto the lower slopes of An Sgarsoch. These tracks are visually prominent in many places. Well-worn footpaths also extend through the main glens, with associated Scottish Rights of Way Society signs and cairns. The ruined former shooting lodges at Geldie and Bynack and the ruined Red House indicate the sporting heritage of the area. Their relative inaccessibility, particularly Geldie Lodge, seems to increase the sense of remoteness of the area and accentuate its vast scale. Glen Dee contains the remains of houses, walled enclosures and cultivation strips from pre-clearance farming communities. The area exhibits a true sense of wild land quality, resulting from the combination of remoteness, the bare and expansive nature of the terrain and the general absence of man-made features.



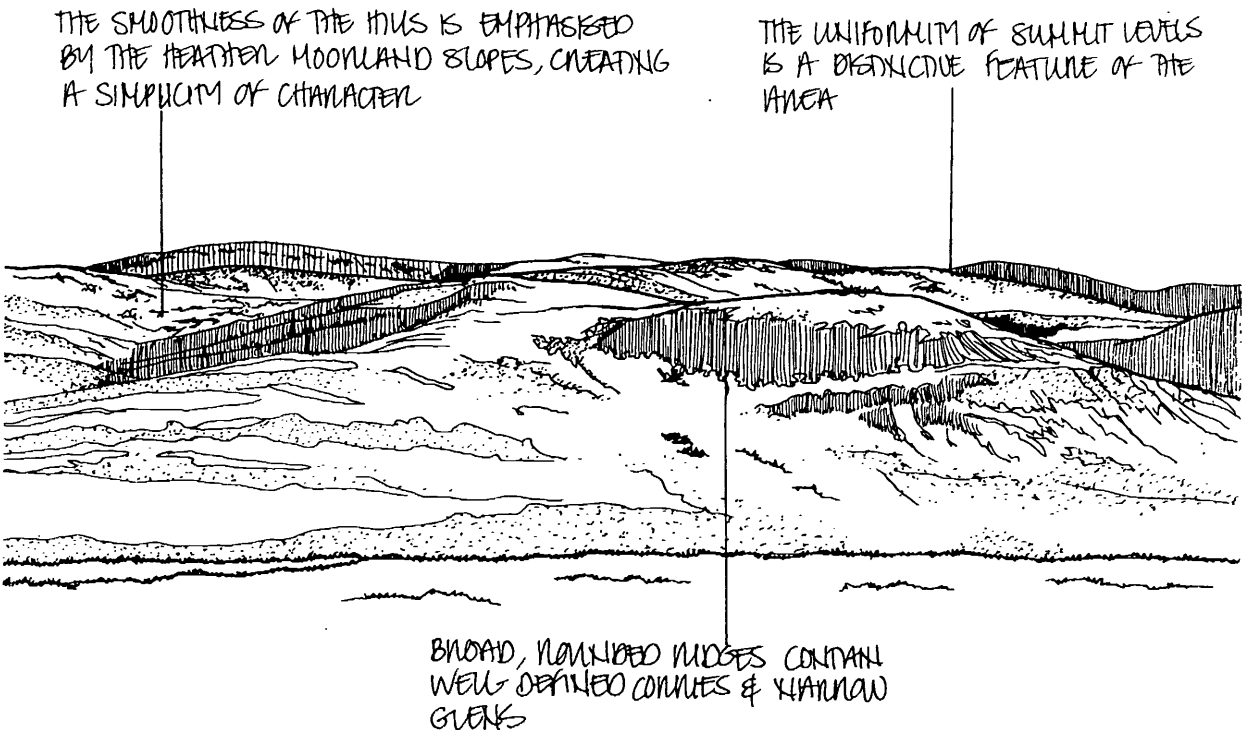
Dalvorar

Extending southwards and south-eastwards from Glen Dee, and continuing outwith the Estate boundary towards Glen Cluanie and Gleann Taitneach, this area is characterised by a series of rounded, smooth summits and broad ridges containing distinct corries and deeply penetrating narrow glens. There is a prominent undulating ridgeline between Carn Liath and Geal Charn which subdivides the area visually and hydrologically. The hillslopes comprise steeply convex slopes which provide strong visual containment to the glens and corries. There is a general uniformity of summit levels and the area acts as the southern backdrop to many of the views from Upper Deeside.

The smooth, rounded landform pattern is emphasised by an almost uniform sward of heather which covers the hillsides, producing a strong sense of uniformity and consistency through the area. To the north, muirburn patterns create distinctive textural and colour contrasts on the hillsides. There is an area of felled plantation on the northern slope of Carn an Leth-allt which contrasts sharply in its geometry and colour with the adjacent heather hillside.

Burns and small streams flow from virtually every corrie in the area and, in places, have caused heavy dissection of the hillsides into prominent rounded spurs.

A vehicle access track penetrates from Glen Ey into the core of the area. Another access track, which lies outwith the Estate boundary on the western slopes of Carn Mor above Glen Ey, forms a prominent visual scar on the hillside, and is visible from much of the eastern side of this area. The remaining area is strongly lacking in any man-made features.







The rounded arrangement of ridges, corries and glens



A series of smooth rounded hills and ridges



The visually prominent access track above Glen Ey, which lies outwith the Estate boundary

### 3.6 THE WOODED GLENS

This Landscape Type, comprising wooded glens separated by broad open ridges, acts as a transition zone between the elevated plateaux and the lower lying Upper Deeside, and extends eastwards outwith the Estate to Invercauld and Gleann an t-Slugain, although the upper sections of this glen are predominantly open in character.

Containing the generally north-west to south-east orientated Glens Quoich and Lui, together with the lower sections of Glens Derry and Luibeg, the area is characterised by remnant native woodlands, predominantly of Caledonian Pine but with areas of birch. These woodlands occupy the glen floors and lower hillslopes, and are interspersed with various geometrically shaped coniferous plantations including non-native species. These lead to gentle heather-clad upper slopes and smooth rounded summits. The generally open canopy and sporadic distribution of the native woodlands contrasts with the dense canopied regimentation of many of the plantations. The native woods form extensive areas of ancient and unburnt timber, but are predominantly of uniform age structure, deer grazing having prevented natural regeneration for many generations. In some sections of the glens, there are extensive open areas of heather or grassland.

All glens contain wide, fast flowing rivers which meander across the glen floors. The hill slopes are dissected by small burns.

Vehicular access tracks penetrate all the glens and mostly act as the main pedestrian routes in the glens. There is a concentration of built development in the area around the confluence of the Luibeg Burn, Derry Water and Lui Water.

This Landscape Type can be sub-divided into three distinct Landscape Character Areas:

- Quoich
- Derry/Luibeg
- Lui





The wooded glens penetrate towards the high plateaux



"The stately grandeur of the native pine woodlands"



Remnants of native woodland randomly scatter the glens and lower hillsides







The combination of woodland, plantation, heather muirburn and river create a diverse mosaic



Stands of native pine rise from rank deep heather



Rocky gorge, waterfalls and mixed exotic conifers create a picturesque scene





Quoich

Lying on the eastern edge of the Estate, Quoich is separated from Glens Lui and Derry by the low, rounded, undulating broad ridge line of Meall an Lundain and Creag Bhalg. The area extends eastwards outwith the Estate over Carn na Criche and Carn na Drochaide into the upper sections of Gleann an t-Slugain.

The area comprises a sinuous glen contained by steep hillsides in its lower reaches to form a narrow enclosed gorge, becoming wider and more open in its upper sections. Large areas of the glen floor and lower hillsides are covered with stands of open-canopied native pine and birchwoods interspersed with several coniferous plantations. The area contains a high number of dead standing pine trees, which make an important contribution to the areas of natural forest. The steep eastern flank of Creag Bhalg contains some mature larch amidst small rocky outcrops. Rank, deep heather growth is the dominant ground vegetation amongst the native pine and birch stands, becoming less deep on the upper, rounded hillslopes. On the eastern side of the glen, muirburn patterns create a mosaic of colour and texture above the tree line. Further north, the extent of tree cover becomes sparser and in places, grassland forms the dominant ground vegetation. In its upper sections, the glen splits as tree cover again becomes more dominant.

In the upper part of the glen, the Quoich Water forms a wide, meandering, relatively slow-flowing stream, becoming more fast-flowing over a boulder-strewn rocky river bed, with the occasional ox-bow and dry gravel beds. Alluvial river terraces, some of eroded gravels, are prominent late and post-glacial features in the middle section of the glen. In its lower sections, it enters the narrow rocky gorge of Linn of Quoich, comprising a dramatic slot gorge, flanked by mixed conifers, particularly larch, forming a picturesque, intimate location, frequently used for informal recreation. The noise of the water rushing through the Linn adds to the character of this section of the glen.

The massive convex slopes of Beinn à Bhuid, with its visually prominent access track, dominate views northwards. At Linn of Quoich, there is a derelict stone cottage known as Queen Victoria's Picnic Cottage.



Derry/Luibeg

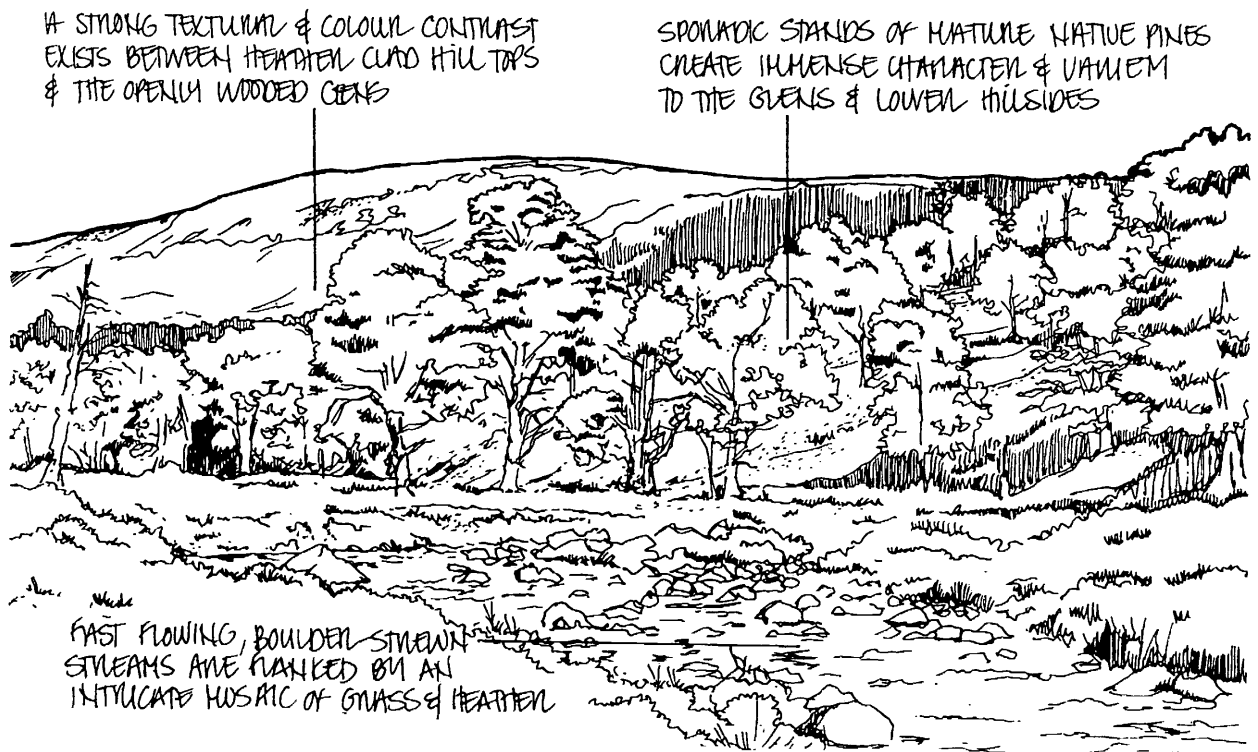
This area is located towards the centre of the Estate and falls entirely within the Estate boundary. It is bounded by Carn Crom, Meall an Lundain and Sgor Dubh/Sgor Mór.

The area comprises two wooded glens which join at Derry Lodge. The floor of the glens and lower hillsides are clothed in patchy native pine woodland which gradually becomes sparser on the upper slopes. On the flattish glen floors, which contain moranic deposits, there is an intricate mosaic of grass and heather amongst the stately pines, which becomes more heather dominant on the more open hillsides. The upper hillsides contrast in colour and texture with the open wooded lower slopes and glen floor.

From a distance, the canopy of the woodlands appears dense but once within them, many open areas allow views to the surrounding hills. These comprise the smooth, rounded, gentle heather slopes of Meall an Lundain, the steep heathery slopes of Carn Crom with its sporadic, small-scale rocky outcrops and the very steep, deep heather slopes of Sgor Dubh and Sgor Mor. Despite the generally extensive woodland coverage, there are strong visual links with the surrounding areas. Carn Crom visually dominates the junction of Glen Derry and Luibeg, due to its steepness and height.

The Derry Water and Luibeg Burn, which join to form the Lui Water, are gently meandering, small rivers flowing amongst wide gravelly beds and containing frequent boulders and rocky outcrops. The Derry Water meanders gently amongst native woodlands and open grassy glades, creating a particularly intimate character.

The area contains considerable built development, centred around the now semi-derelict Derry Lodge, a substantial stone-built former shooting lodge, with an associated timber barn. A single storey timber building houses Mountain Rescue facilities and there is a small bothy nearby. There is also a white painted former Keepers cottage at Luibeg. Just below the junction of the Derry Water and Luibeg Burn, there is a vehicular bridge, whilst the Derry Water is also crossed by a timber footbridge. The number and varied design of these man-made features, along with evidence of human-related impact on the area around Derry Lodge, detracts from the overall character of the area.





The random pattern of woodland at the junction of Glen Derry and Glen Luibeg



Woodland cover gradually becomes sparser on the hillsides



Majestic mature native pines amongst grassy glades







The broad, heavily-wooded lower section of Glen Lui



The fast-flowing Lui Water with its gravel beds meanders amongst native woodland



The flat, open upper section of Glen Lui is dominated by the Macdui Massif





## Lui

This area lies south-east of Derry/Luibeg and is bounded by Meall an Lundain, Sgor Dubh and Upper Deeside. The area is self-contained within the Estate boundary.

In its lower southern reaches, the area comprises a broad, flat-floored glen, predominantly tree covered, which becomes narrower but more open in character towards Derry Lodge. Woodland cover comprises an intricate mix of open stands of native pines which scatter the glen floor and become sparser on the lower hillsides, fenced enclosures with extensive open native pine regeneration, and dense coniferous plantations with geometric edges. In the southern section of this area, this woodland pattern merges imperceptibly into the woodland of Upper Deeside. On the eastern side of lower Glen Lui, there are many ancient gnarled pine of immense girth, whilst small areas of birch also occur throughout the wooded areas.

At Black Bridge, the character of Glen Lui changes. Steeper heather-clad hillsides, occasionally densely-clothed with spruce plantations and with exposed rock slabs on the eastern side of Sgor Dubh, contain a flat, open grassy glen. The light greens and browns of the glen floor contrast markedly with the adjacent dark browns and greens of the hillsides. Two symmetrical hillocks created by glacial deposition form prominent visual features on the floor of the glen near Black Bridge. Here, there are extensive remains of the stone footings of houses, shielings and walls from periods when communities occupied and farmed this glen. From this area, the Macdui Massif forms a dominant backdrop to views north-eastwards.

The Lui Water gently meanders among the flat glen floor with occasional former channels creating small water bodies. Small-scale alluvial river terraces also occur on the south-west side of the glen. At wide meanders, there are extensive gravel and shingle beds. In its lower reaches, the river becomes more rocky in character, straighter in its route and faster flowing with frequent small waterfalls, rock shelves and deep pools.



### 3.7 UPPER DEESIDE

This Landscape Type includes the section of Deeside west of Braemar to the Linn of Dee. Whilst it extends outwith the Estate boundary to the east and south, it is a visually contained glen, with the surrounding southern and eastern hillsides and summits forming a generally strong sense of visual containment.

This area forms a managed landscape where the contribution of man's activities compliments the natural landscape features. The area comprises a broad, flat river flood plain of glacial origin, enclosed by steep wooded hillsides of birch, larch and coniferous plantations leading to open, predominantly heather-clad, hillsides. To the east, the flood plain is open with unimproved pasture, occasional coniferous shelterbelts and areas of birch scrub woodland, whilst further west, the policies of Mar Lodge and associated pastoral land-uses become more dominant. The glen becomes more constrained by the steeply wooded hillsides to the west, with more dominant woodland cover of native pine and coniferous plantations on the lower hillsides. These factors create a much stronger sense of visual enclosure at the west end of the glen. Whilst the surrounding mountains are well set back from the glen, they are never so far removed as not to present an important backdrop in most views.

There are frequent views of the River Dee, which is a major visual focus of the area's character. Comprising a broad, meandering, fast flowing river with gravel banks, shingle bars and braided channels in the east, it becomes gradually more straightened by the enclosing hillsides to the west, with many boulders and rocky outcrops. In many areas, flood defence barriers have been constructed, particularly to the west of Mar Lodge and south of Allanaquoich. Several rivers join the Dee through narrow, enclosed glens and the rocky gorges of Linn of Dee and Corriemulzie are important features within the glen. The Quoich Water forms a prominent alluvial fan towards the eastern end of the area.

On the slopes of Creag an Fhithich, there are fine stands of mature larch and spruce whilst the hillsides north of Mar Lodge comprise remnant pine stumps and bare trunks following post-war clearance. These slopes contain small rocky outcrops and patches of scree resulting from the underlying schist rocks, as well as small areas of bracken which adds distinctive colour to this hillslope.

This area is the most heavily settled part of the Estate, with a general dispersed linear pattern of single and two storey vernacular cottages and buildings located adjacent or close to the Linn of Dee and Quoich roads. Mar Lodge itself forms a prominent focal feature in the glen, with its red tile roof contrasting with its surrounding mixed policy plantings.

Upper Deeside attracts many visitors due to its relative ease of access and scenic qualities. At busy periods, visitors and their cars form the dominant visual impression of the area. Popular localities in the glen are frequently magnets for the worst aspects of human enjoyment of the countryside, with litter, erosion and fires having a locally small-scale detrimental effect on the character of the area.

This Landscape Type can be sub-divided into three distinct Landscape Character Areas:-

- Allanaquoich Haughland
- Mar Lodge Policies
- Linn of Dee



A diverse mix of landscape elements contribute to Upper Deeside's character



The flat haughlands and mixed policies contrast with the surrounding hillsides



A narrow, heavily-wooded glen encloses the River Dee in the upper reaches







The broad, predominantly open flat floor of the glen



The contrast of colour and texture of the glen floor and hillsides



The surrounding hills visually contain the glen





**Allanaquoich Haughland**

This area forms the eastern section of Upper Deeside, extending outwith the Estate boundary to east of Braemar, and is bounded by Morrone to the south and Carn na Drochaide to the north.

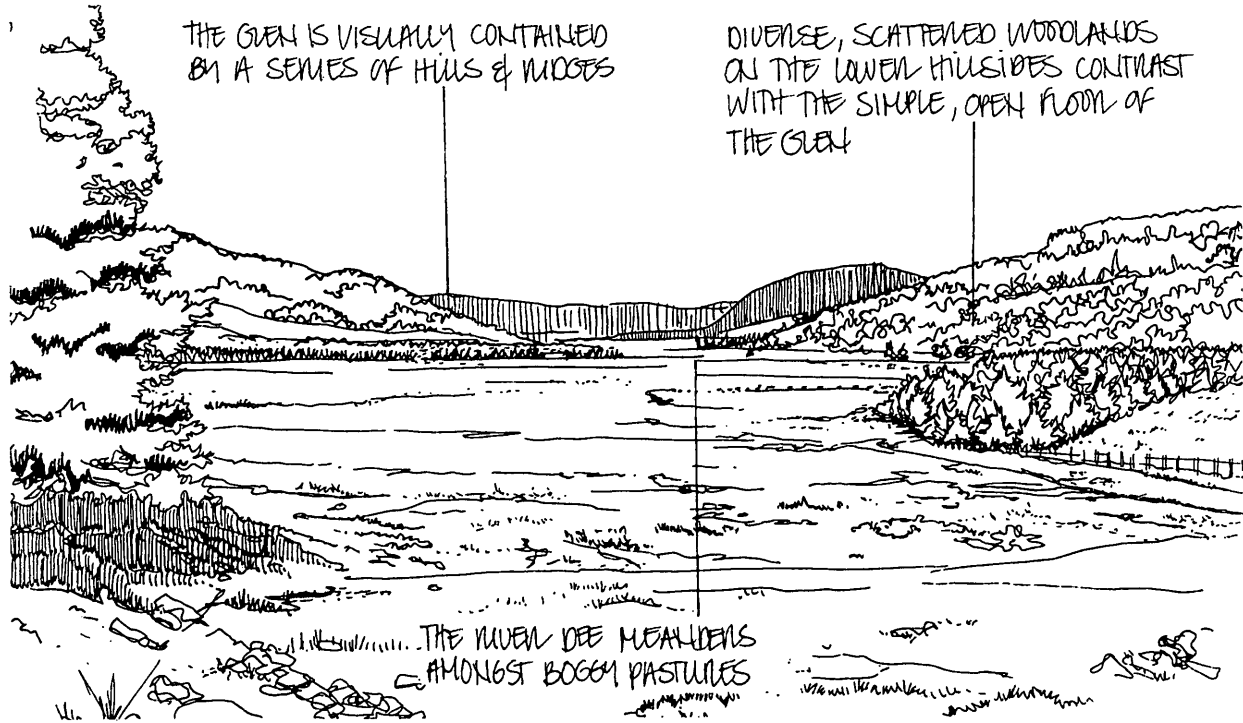
The area comprises a broad, uniformly flat glen floor which forms a distinct junction with the steeply enclosing, gently undulating hillsides, particularly on its south-eastern side. The glen floor is predominantly open, containing extensive boggy, unimproved pastures and occasional narrow, linear, coniferous shelterbelts. Towards the eastern edge of the Estate, open birch and willow scrub occupies most of the glen floor.

The gentler, rolling, northern hillsides comprise smooth, heather slopes with groups of sporadic mixed woodland and a predominantly coniferous plantation on the lower slopes. The steeper southern hillsides of broader spurs and shoulders contain scattered groups of predominantly mixed deciduous woodlands amongst grassy openings and clearings on the lower slopes. To the west, more extensive coniferous plantations rise to the sprawling brown, heather-covered mass of hillside leading to the summit of Morrone. The Linn of Dee road forms a prominent horizontal edge across the hillside to the coniferous plantations.

The height and mass of Morrone visually dominates the southern side of this area and generally the area is contained by the nearby hills. Looking south-west along the glen, prominent ridgelines contain the glen, producing a series of progressively receding horizons. The elevated sections on the Linn of Dee road provide views to the distant plateaux.

The wide River Dee, with its large meanders, extensive gravel bars, braided channels and isolated pools forms a prominent feature of the glen floor. There are numerous drainage channels and boggy marshes on the glen floor, and the alluvial fan where the Quoich Water joins the Dee.

Allanaquoich, a complex of various white-painted former farm buildings, forms a prominent visual element on the north side of the glen, with its haybarn forming a large-scale built feature on the edge of the unimproved pastures. Occasional isolated vernacular development closely related to the Linn of Dee road occurs on the south side of the glen.



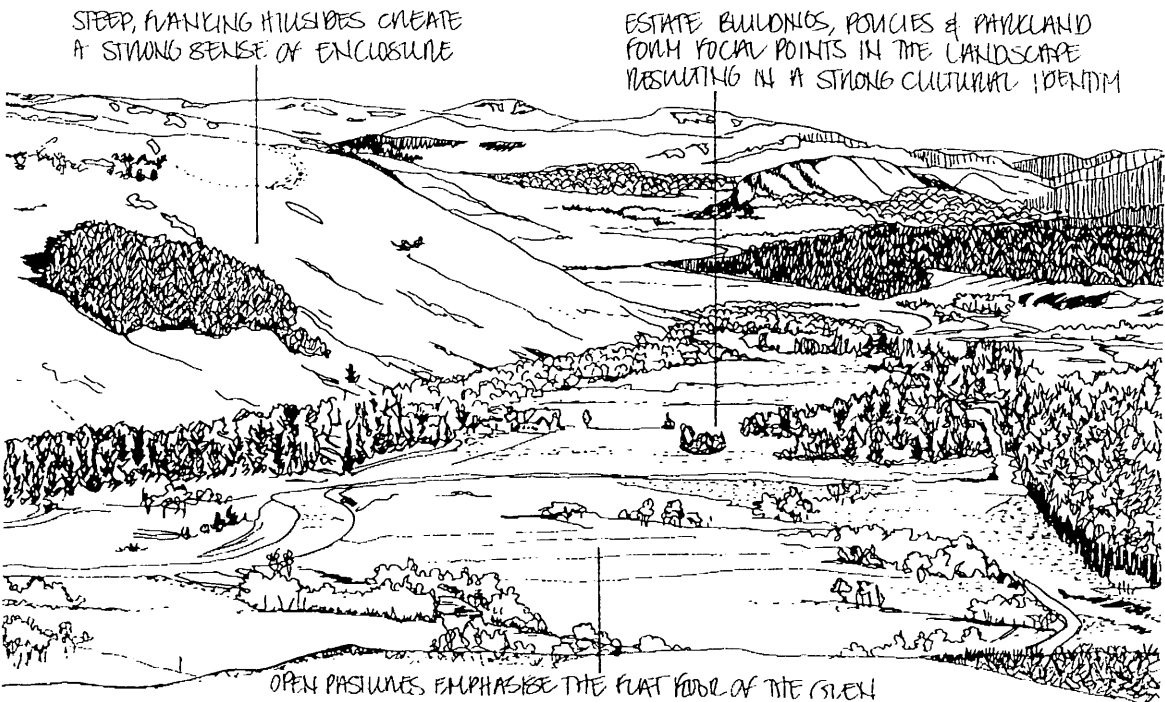
Mar Lodge Policies

The Mar Lodge Policies form the central section of Upper Deeside and extend outwith the Estate boundary to the south to beyond Creag an Fhithich.

The area comprises a wide, flat glen floor flanked by steep enclosing hillsides which are predominantly wooded to the south. The eastern section of the glen floor is dominated by Mar Lodge, an imposing, late-Victorian hunting lodge with associated stable block and other buildings, set within open grassy parkland with occasional specimen trees. The parkland is surrounded by policy plantings of mixed native and non-native conifers and deciduous trees. These policies provide a strong sense of enclosure, particularly to the east and south, which is further reinforced by the backdrop of the steep hillsides. A double avenue of limes leading to the stable block has been recently planted. The open aspect to the south-west provides views over Inverey to the backdrop of southern hills. Further west, and immediately outwith the Estate boundary, the flat, open, improved pastures around Inverey form a major element of the glen floor.

To the north, there is a large dense stand of native pine woodland behind Mar Lodge but the hillside is predominantly open in character, comprising a mosaic of heather, scree and small areas of bracken. It is also peppered by remnant tree stumps and dead trunks resulting from post-war clearance. This area has been fenced to encourage natural regeneration and recent deciduous tree planting has been undertaken in clumps on the lower slopes. Further west, open stands of native pines occur, which merge into the denser woodlands of Linn of Dee. On the slopes of Creag an Fhithich, fine specimens of larch and spruce amongst small rocky outcrops cover the hillside, visually merging into the policy plantings and contributing greatly to the overall setting of Mar Lodge.

The River Dee gently meanders through the pastures of Inverey, becoming straight and more contained on the south side of the glen. Victoria Bridge, a white-painted open metal structure on stone piers, and its associated stone lodge, form the main entrance to Mar Lodge and act as important focal features. The small community of Inverey comprises traditional stone-built cottages with small gardens strung predominantly along the northern side of the Linn of Dee road. These, together with the Estate buildings and policies, create a landscape with a strong cultural identity.

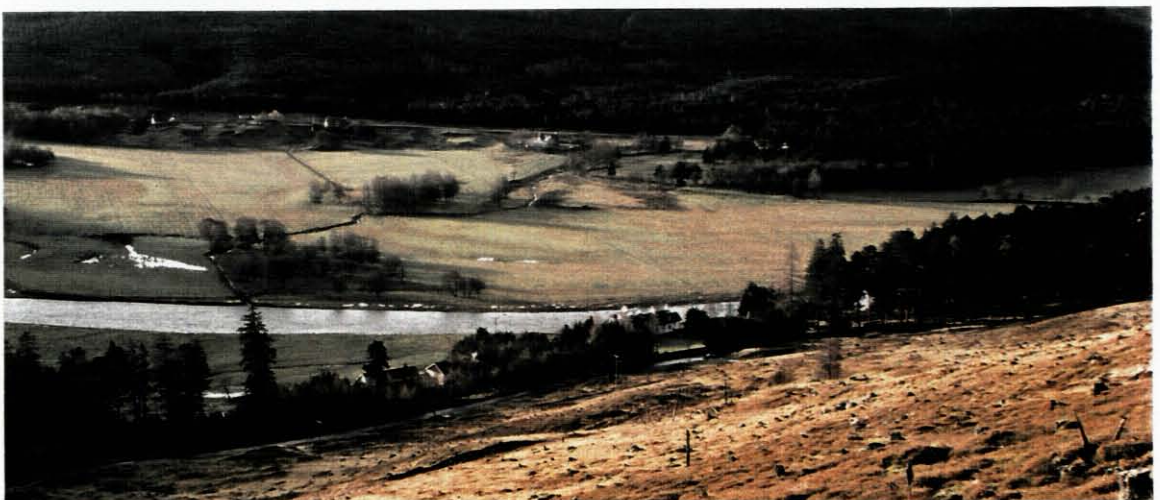




Steep hillsides enclose the policy plantings on the floor of the glen



The Mar Lodge open parkland enclosed by policy plantings and adjacent hillsides



The improved pastures of Inverey emphasise the flat floor of the glen



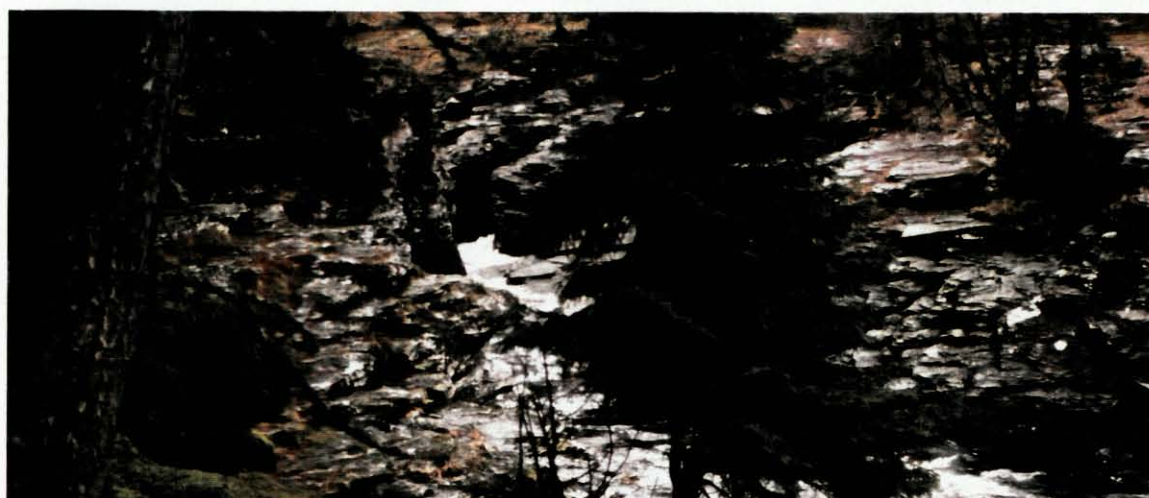




The predominantly wooded glen around the River Dee



A strong sense of enclosure produced by dense stands of woodland



The rocky gorge of Linn of Dee is a popular scenic attraction





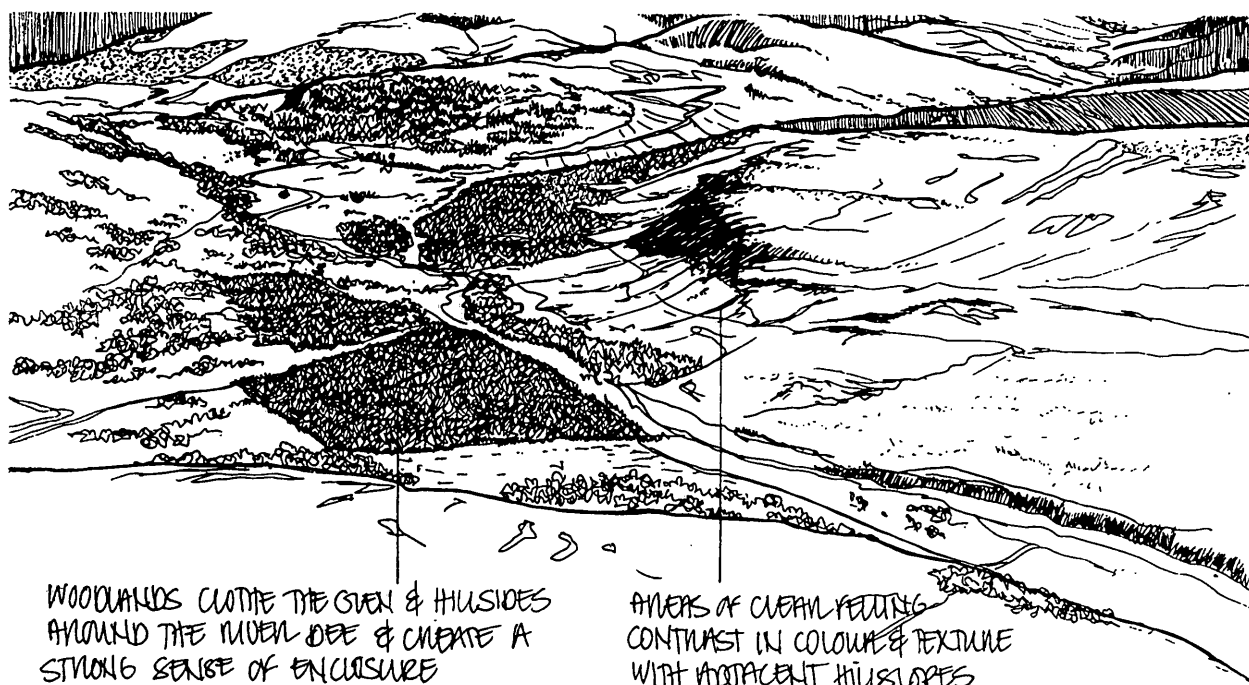
## Linn of Dee

This area forms the western section of Upper Deeside west of Inverey and is fully contained within the Estate boundary by the woodlands of Glen Lui and the slopes of Carn na Moine.

The area comprises a narrow glen, contained to the south by the steep hillside of Carn na Moine and to the north by the woodlands and plantations of Glen Lui and Doire Bhraghad. It is a predominantly wooded area which exhibits a strong sense of enclosure, with only occasional tantalisingly brief glimpses to distant hills. Dense stands of mature, predominantly native pine woodlands clothe the narrow floor of the glen and the sides of the River Dee. In places, fenced enclosures of younger pine contrast with the older, more stately trees. Around Linn of Dee, spruce, larch and fir become more prominent, resulting from 18th century 'improvement' of the landscape. A plantation on the south side of the glen has been clear felled and this area contrasts strongly with the adjacent heather hillside in terms of its colour and texture. Within the wooded areas, there are also small grassland meadows which provide relief from the strong sense of enclosure of much of the area.

There are frequent views of the River Dee which follows a fairly constrained straight course. At Linn of Dee, it thunders through a narrow rocky gorge to become a fast flowing, wide river with many small rapids, rocky shelves extending from the shore and projecting boulders.

There are a number of individual vernacular-styled cottages adjacent to the Linn of Dee and Quoich roads. The Victorian Linn of Dee bridge comprises an impressive gothic-arch of well dressed granite and forms a popular scenic location in combination with the rocky gorge below. As such, this area attracts many visitors, leading to problems of litter, erosion and fire. A public car park is well located in a mixed coniferous plantation and minimises the visual impact of large numbers of parked cars.





**Chapter 4**  
**LANDSCAPE ATTRIBUTES**





## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter identifies the key landscape attributes of the Mar Lodge Estate. These are particular landscape elements or features which give added character to the area as a whole and which make a major contribution to its distinctiveness and sense of place.

In many cases, these landscape attributes are not confined to specific Landscape Character Areas, but occur across a range of different Landscape Types or Landscape Character Areas. The landscape attributes include:-

- The Plateaux
- The Native Woodlands
- The Moorlands
- Rivers and Streams
- Upland Lochs and Pools
- Gorges and Waterfalls
- Estate Architecture
- Designed Landscape Features
- Archaeological Features

## **4.2 The Plateaux**

The summit plateaux form part of the largest tract of high ground in Britain, forming a dominantly physical landscape which has been little modified by man. The plateaux are the nearest equivalent in Britain to the Arctic tundra and provide an important habitat for arctic-alpine flora and associated fauna. In visual terms, due to their elevation and immense bulk, they form the principal focus within the Estate, forming a backdrop to the surrounding landscape of wooded glens, moorland and straths. The huge scale and variety of the landforms, the expansiveness of the views, the very bareness of the ground and the strong sense of remoteness, ruggedness and wildness are all key components, allied to a harsh and unforgiving climate where the elements act with an intensity not known at lower altitudes, which give the plateaux their distinctive quality. There are strong contrasts between the preglacial and periglacial characteristics of the summit plateaux and the adjacent glacial troughs and corries which define them, in terms of slope profiles, extent of bare rock and geomorphological origin.

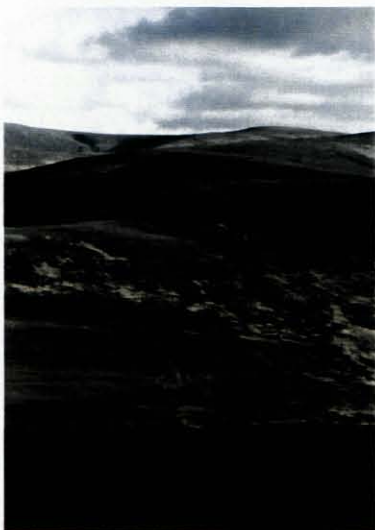
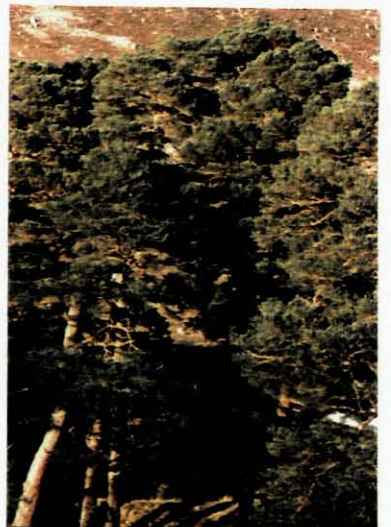
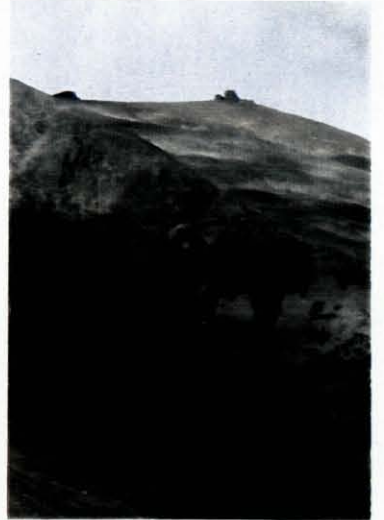
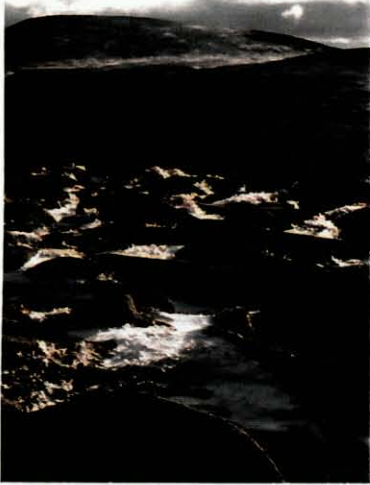
## **4.3 The Native Woodlands**

The boreal forests of pine and birch give the area much of its distinctive character. The old Caledonian pinewoods, although in scattered smallish blocks, are amongst some of the finest in Scotland for ancient and unburned timber and are of national importance. These largely open-canopied mature woodlands scatter the lower hillslopes and valley floors, providing a silent and stately sense of grandeur and of history, adding a particular richness of character and colour to the glens. These old woodlands form part of the historical heritage of Scotland. Birch woodlands, many of which are of ancient origin, and areas of birch within the pine woods provide a stunning contrast to the dark pines, particularly in Autumn.

## **4.4 The Moorlands**

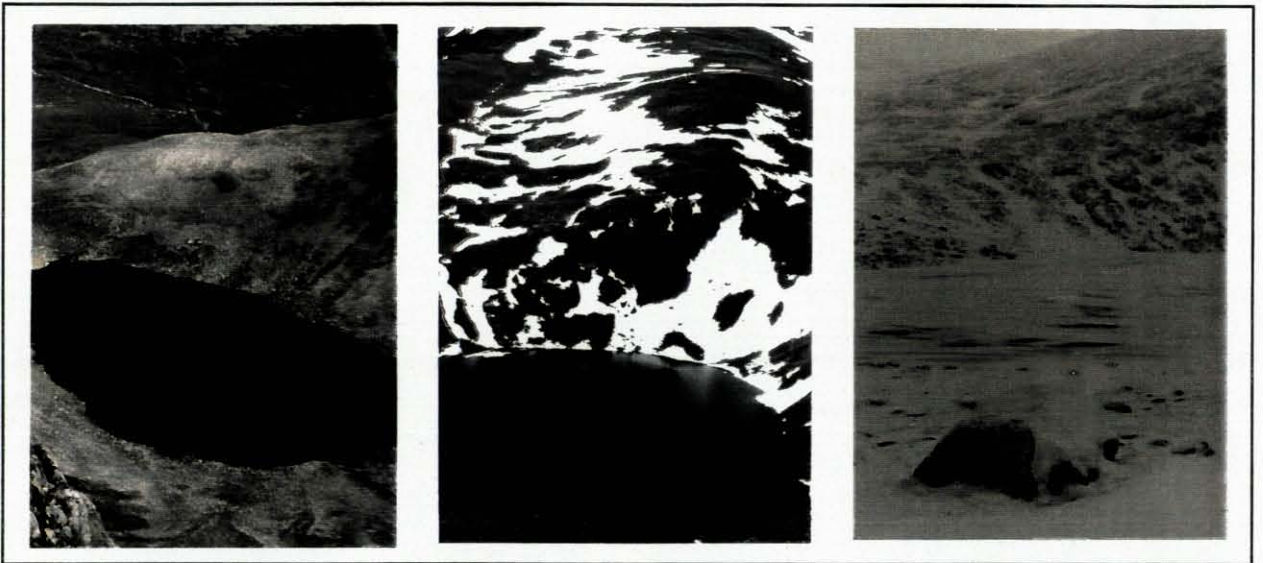
The moorlands cover a vast, remote tract of hills, forming a seemingly endless succession of rounded, smooth ridges and broad, open glens. The area is dominated by wet heather moorland and high level blanket bog. The absence of any significant tree cover accentuates the smooth, gentle landform patterns and strengthens the strong, open character and sense of remoteness. The intricate mosaic of heather moorland and grassland becomes an expanse of bright purple pink in late Summer and is transformed in Winter into an undulating carpet of broad ridges and shallow corries which merge into a limitless snowscape.















## **4.5 Rivers and Streams**

The rivers and streams of the Estate constitute the headwaters of the Dee, one of the principal rivers of Eastern Scotland, noted for its pristine and important riverine habitats. Throughout their length, these water courses, which drain almost every corrie and glen within the Estate, change from rushing, foaming mountains burns to narrow, boulder-strewn meandering streams to wide, fast-flowing rivers with frequently erosive tendencies. These rivers have created many distinctive fluvioglacial features in the glens of the Estate. The clearness of their waters, the noise and movement that they provide and the visual diversity they add to the area are their key characteristics.

## **4.6 Upland Lochs and Pools**

Throughout the plateaux, contained amongst deep glacial corries, there are a number of high-level lochs and small pools which are a distinctive feature of the area. Many form some of the best examples of arctic-alpine lochs in Britain, particularly Loch Etchachan and Lochan Uaine on Cairn Toul. These lochs usually hold ice for more than half the year. The Pools of Dee in the Lairig Ghru and the Wells of Dee, small pools on the Braeriach plateau, are small basin lochs formed in shallow depressions amongst huge boulder fields. The still, reflective qualities of these lochs and pools adds further interest to the high plateaux.

## **4.7 Gorges and Waterfalls**

Within Upper Deeside, three Linns, or narrow gorges, provide considerable scenic interest to the area. The Linns of Dee, Quoich and Corriemulzie are spectacular places where rivers cascade through narrow rock channels, cut into the schistose rock, creating circular cauldrons and hollows, and small waterfalls. In periods of spate, the combination of the deafening thunder of rushing water, clouds of fine spray and the tempestuous vortex of the waves provide a dramatic scene. Elsewhere, waterfalls flow over the plateaux edges, cascading down rock slabs, or else breach the lips of hanging corries.

## **4.8 Estate Architecture**

Many of the major Estate buildings date from the 19th century and as such exhibit architectural styles or features readily associated with a Victorian hunting estate. Mar Lodge itself is a substantial hunting lodge in a traditional Tudor style and forms a dominant focal feature of Upper Deeside. Other buildings, though of more modest scale, nevertheless form important examples of Victorian picturesque rustic architecture. A series of small, yet substantial, satellite shooting lodges are located in remote glens but are now mostly ruins or in a poor state of repair. These lodges were built of mortared rubble construction with roughly dressed granite quoins and openings. Despite their current condition, they provide a faint air of Victorian elegance amidst remote and wild settings. Elsewhere, modest vernacular, predominantly stone-built cottages flank the Linn of Dee road. Other architectural features, such as the prominent white painted Victoria Bridge and its associated gatehouse form a valuable contribution to the architectural heritage of the Estate.

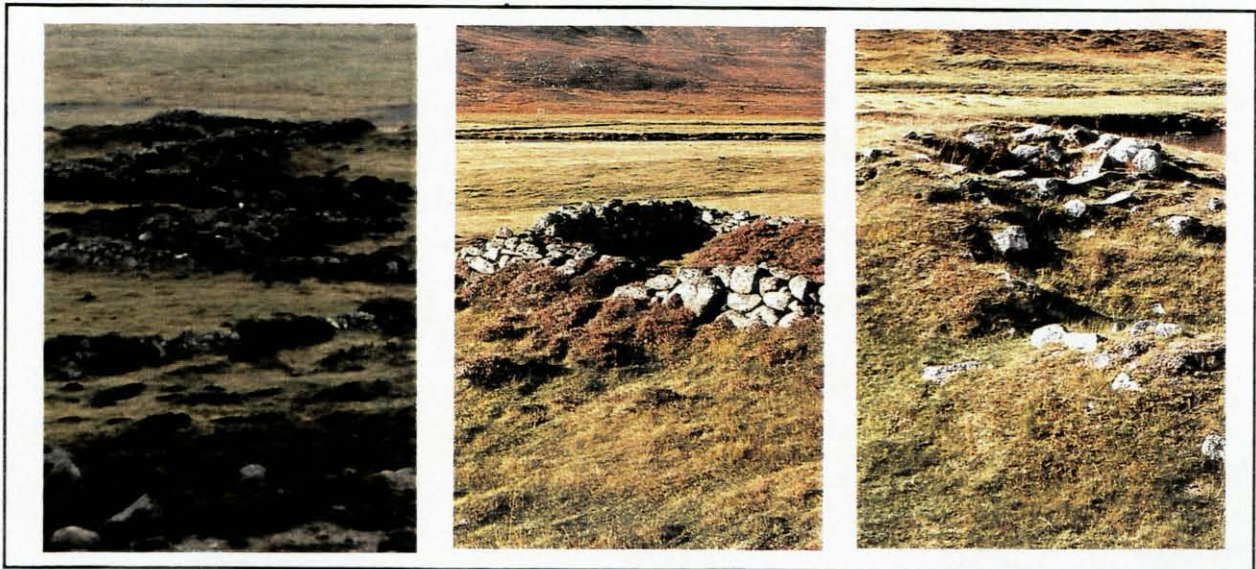
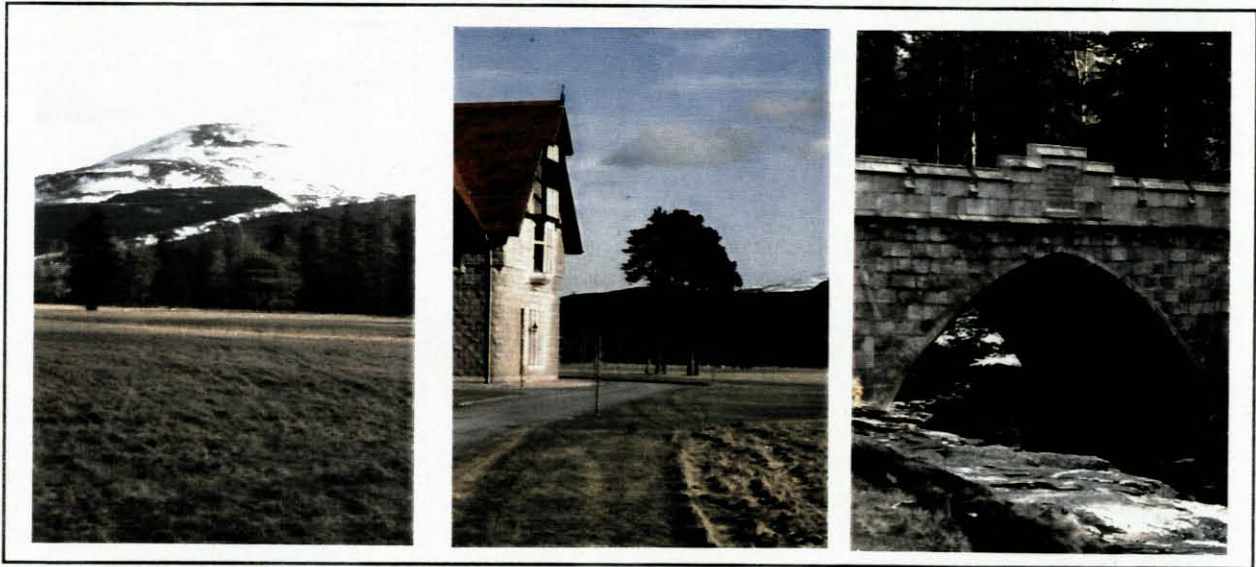
## **4.9 Designed Landscape Features**

Whilst Mar Lodge and its immediate environs does not appear in the Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes, there are clear examples of conscious design decisions being made to improve and modify the appearance of the landscape, both in the Age of Improvement and the Victorian era. The clearance of the haughland around Mar Lodge, the planting of the policy tree belts and the tree planting on Creag an Fhithich were deliberate measures to create an appropriate setting for the Lodge, with the conscious introduction of newly discovered species from abroad, both to indicate the standing and importance of the landowner and to create greater diversity and scenic quality to the area. The Mar Lodge policies form an upland example of the work of 19th century plant collectors. This improvement principle was also adopted at the Linns of Dee, Quoich and Corriemulzie to improve the attractiveness of the area for increasing numbers of visitors. Other design elements such as Linn of Dee Bridge, Victoria Bridge and its associated lodge were all consciously located and detailed to provide maximum interest and character to the area.

## **4.10 Archaeological Features**

Throughout the upper reaches of Glen Dee and Glen Lui, a series of remains of 16th-19th century townships, shielings and associated cultivation marks indicate the extensive farming communities which once inhabited these remote areas. These remains date from the medieval period onwards and provide clear evidence of man's interaction with his environment in the locality, giving additional historical depth to the appreciation of the Mar Lodge landscape. Each of the remains form integral elements which collectively represent an agricultural way of life which was distinctive to much of upland Scotland in post-medieval times. They also indicate the different aspects of agricultural practice from that period and, as such, form an important landscape attribute of the Mar Lodge landscape. These remains are exceptional in Scottish terms as they are relatively intact, having suffered little interference or alteration in subsequent periods, primarily due to the prominence of shooting over agricultural practice.







**CHAPTER 5**  
**THE POTENTIAL FOR LANDSCAPE CHANGE: KEY ISSUES**





## **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

Whilst landscape change is essentially a natural and dynamic process, this section considers the potential ways in which the landscape of Mar Lodge Estate may change in the future as a result of man's influence. Whilst the major potential for landscape change throughout the Estate will stem from the management proposals currently being considered by NTS, other factors, such as planning initiatives and controls, together with external factors outwith the direct control of the Estate, can also contribute to landscape change within or adjacent to the Estate. Whilst some landscape change may have a detrimental effect on landscape character, other forms of landscape change may offer opportunities for landscape enhancement or for increasing landscape diversity throughout the Estate.

The key issues considered in this chapter will form the basis for the formulation of a Landscape Strategy and Guidelines in the following chapter.

## **5.2 PLANNING CONTEXT**

### **Introduction**

This section considers the planning context of the Mar Lodge Estate in terms of policies and proposals which may lead to landscape change within and around the Estate. The statutory Structure Plan and Local Plan are discussed, together with other relevant planning studies and management reports applicable to the area. Designations which apply to the Mar Lodge Estate are also outlined.

### **Grampian Structure Plan**

This plan establishes the broad framework of strategic planning policies throughout Grampian Region. Strategy 2: The Environment places strategic emphasis on the safeguarding and enhancement of the quality of the physical environment by ensuring that development and land-use respect the intrinsic qualities of the most valued elements of the environment, conserving natural resources and maintaining the quality of Grampian's environment by careful management and use of land and property for future generations.

Grampian Region consider the Cairngorms to be one of the most valued elements within the Region, devoting a specific chapter to the area within Part 4: Special Aspects of the Structure Plan. They consider wild and remote land is a distinctive characteristic of upland Grampian and is rare in Europe. The Region recognise that such land is being encroached upon despite being subject to several designations aimed at preserving and protecting these qualities. Generally, there is a strong presumption against development within Grampian's Cairngorm Policy area, which encompasses all of Mar Lodge Estate. The Plan seeks to guide development and promote conservation and recreation policies which sustain the natural and man-made assets of the Cairngorms, and as such recommend the Government secures a co-ordinated management strategy for the Cairngorms, and also take forward its proposed World Heritage listing of the Cairngorms, with further consultation on its proposed boundary.

The Structure Plan designates an extensive Area of Regional Landscape Significance (ARLS), which includes Mar Lodge Estate, within which the siting and design of all development shall respect the special nature of the landscape. The detailed extent of

the ARLS is to be defined by the appropriate Local Plan.

The Structure Plan also recognises the international importance in nature conservation terms of the remnants of the pine and birch Caledonian Forest in Upper Deeside. It welcomes the Cairngorms Working Party's proposal for a Highland Deeside Forest, with Proposal 20 of the Structure Plan supporting measures that encourage the regeneration of the Caledonian Forest in Deeside.

The Structure Plan recognises the importance of leisure and recreation facilities to the community but, at the same time, that these should not be detrimental to the environment. The contribution of downhill skiing to the rural economy is acknowledged and its value to areas with few other economic opportunities. However, existing designations are considered important constraints on the acceptability of any future downhill skiing proposals and there would be strong presumption against skiing development in areas of very high conservation value in terms of wild birds, flora, fauna and natural heritage. However, provision and promotion of cross country skiing is recommended to District Councils, Tourist Boards, local Enterprise Companies and the Forestry Commission. As part of their Countryside Recreation Strategy, the Regional Council encourage public access to land and are keen to develop, with others, an integrated system of paths and to maintain and upgrade existing paths, particularly traditional drove roads through the mountains.

Collectively, these policies, proposals and recommendations have the potential to influence the appearance of the landscape at various scales. However, the main strategic aim of the environmental aspects of the Structure Plan is towards conservation and enhancement of the natural heritage of the Mar Lodge Estate area and the sensitive integration of proposed development where this is clearly demonstrated to be compatible with this aim.

### **Kincardine and Deeside District Wide Finalised Local Plan**

This Local Plan translates the broad framework of policies outlined in the Structure Plan into more detailed policies and proposals. The Plan recognises the wide geographical diversity of the District and the problems of the area, particularly the need for a balance between conservation and utilisation of the District's natural resources. The Plan proposes a presumption against development in National Scenic Areas except where it can be demonstrated that it does not adversely affect the special character of these areas. The Plan also considers vehicle hill tracks required for sporting purposes to be developments requiring planning permission. In this respect, the District Council aim to seek an Article 4 Direction removing permitted development rights for vehicle hill tracks within that part of Grampian Region's ARLS above 300m. Mar Lodge Estate falls completely within this designated area.

There is a specific proposal to develop, with adjacent Local Authorities and interested agencies, a series of management zones and associated policies to protect the most fragile areas of the Cairngorms and identify areas for recreational opportunities whilst respecting traditional land uses. Policies to protect Listed Buildings and features of archaeological heritage from development which would adversely affect their particular qualities are included. The District Council also outline their support for the maintenance and enhancement of native broadleaved and pine woodlands and their opposition to the introduction of exotic tree species.

The Plan outlines detailed proposals for various measures in and immediately around the





## **Common Sense and Sustainability**

This report of the Cairngorms Working Party to the Secretary of State for Scotland issued in December 1992, prepared recommendations for the preparation of an integrated Management Strategy for the Cairngorms area and for an administrative structure which would ensure implementation of such a strategy. Mar Lodge Estate lies at the core of the area considered by the Working Party. The report sets out the guiding principles for a future management plan of the area which is currently in the process of preparation by the Cairngorms Partnership.

The report makes numerous recommendations intended to set standards to safeguard the natural heritage of the area and for sustainable development which are considered to be required for the area as a whole. In particular, one of its main recommendations is the designation of the Cairngorms area as a National Heritage Area. It also identified specific issues which the Management Plan should address, such as protecting and enhancing the wide-ranging natural heritage features, restoring damaged habitats, extending the Caledonian Forest, especially in Strathspey and Deeside and maintaining distinctive open ground such as the heather moorlands of the Eastern Cairngorms. The report's recommendations set the framework for a Management Plan which has the potential to result in various forms of landscape change within and around the Mar Lodge Estate, particularly in terms of native woodland expansion, moorland management and recreation.

The Management Plan, by taking a comprehensive overview of the whole Cairngorms area, should provide greater influence for co-ordinated and integrated management throughout the area, in particular in terms of an integrated visitor strategy.

## **Planning Context for the Cairngorms**

This report undertaken by David Tyldesley for the Cairngorm Partnership undertook a review of all existing planning legislation and policies applicable to the Cairngorms. It reviewed Structure and Local Plans, designations, indicative forestry strategies and legislative issues.

## **Existing and Potential Designations**

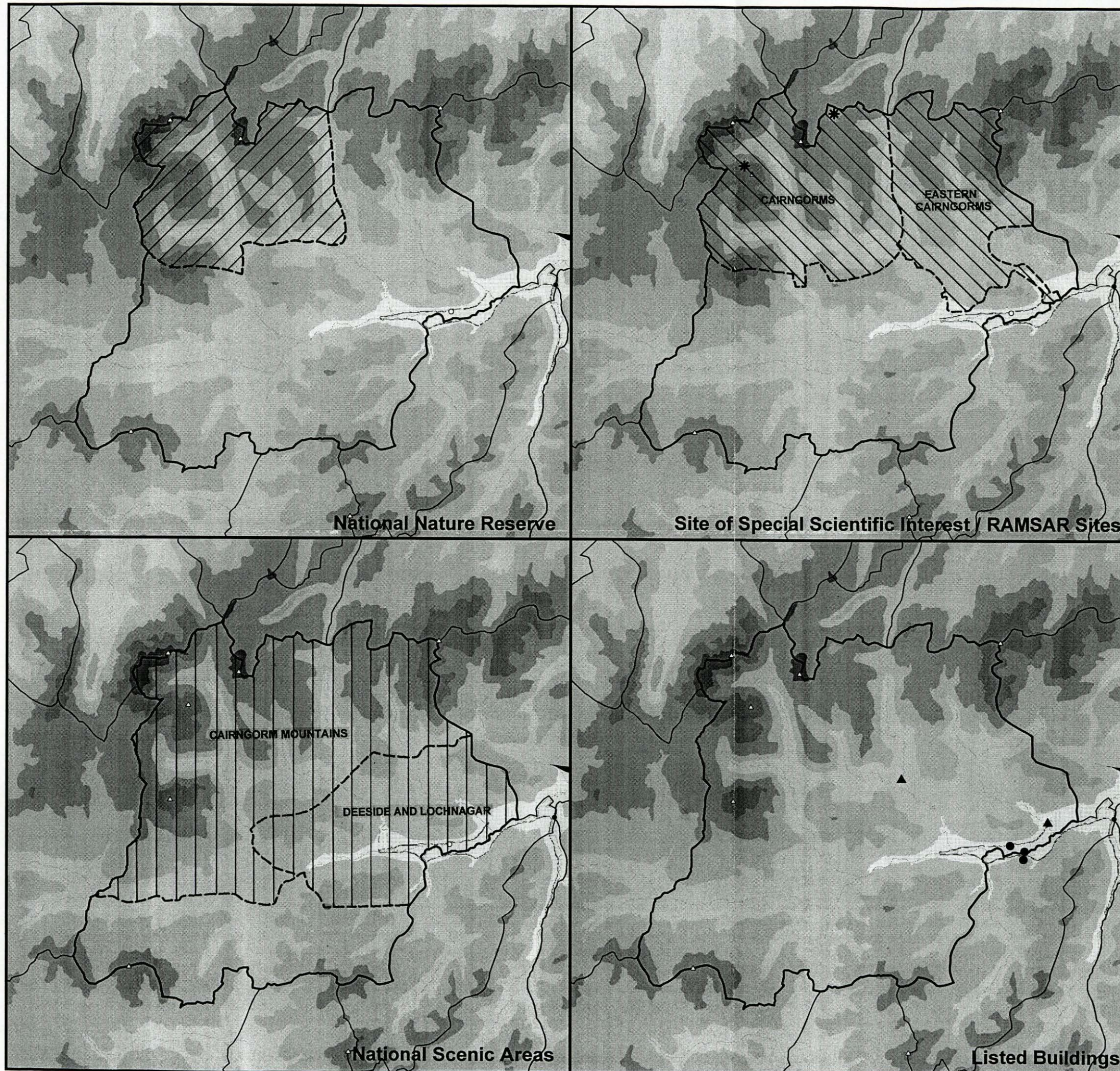
### **General**

Mar Lodge Estate is currently covered by a number of existing landscape and nature conservation designations aimed at protecting aspects of the landscape and its natural heritage. These are shown on Figure 22. The Estate may also be subject to various potential designations in the future.

### **International Designations**








In 1990, the Government included the Cairngorms for listing as a World Heritage Site in its submission to the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO. All of the Mar Lodge Estate was included in the area submitted. World Heritage Listing, if accepted by UNESCO, would be an indication of the universal heritage value of the Cairngorms and would underpin the existing conservation commitment of the nominating Government, rather than add an additional level of protection to the area. The advice contained in the Cairngorms Partnership Management Plan concerning standards of management and protection may result in the Government formally nominating the Cairngorms for listing.

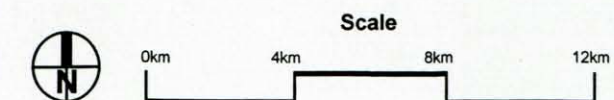




**Figure 22**  
**Existing Designations**

**Legend**

-  Estate Boundary
-  Adjacent Estate Boundaries
-  National Nature Reserve
-  Site of Special Scientific Interest / RAMSAR Sites
-  National Scenic Areas
-  Category B Listed Building
-  Category C(S) Listed Building







The Cairngorm Area is a possible Special Protection Area (pSPA) under the European Community Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds, due to its range of upland and pinewood bird species. If confirmed, this designation would place an obligation on the British Government to maintain the favourable conservation of the area and would, together with the associated Pan European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, provide a framework for landscape and biological diversity conservation, which could result in changes to the appearance of the landscape. The Cairngorms also form part of a possible Special Area of Conservation (pSAC) under the European Habitats Directive, due to its native pinewoods and complex of central montane habitats. The pSPA and pSAC cover a significant part of the Estate.

Under the Ramsar Convention, Loch Etchachan and Lochan Uaine are both designated as non-bird Ramsar sites, a designation aimed at the active conservation of internationally important wetlands or water bodies.

The Estate is also covered by Objective 5B status, making it eligible for matched funding from the European Union towards environmental projects in rural areas.

### National Designations

The Estate lies largely within two National Scenic Areas (NSA) in recognition of its nationally outstanding scenic value and quality. The northern part of the Estate, generally north of the Geldie, Derry Lodge and the upper section of Glen Quoich forms part of the Cairngorm Mountains NSA, whilst the south and east of the estate forms part of the Deeside and Lochnagar NSA. Proposed new development is subject to special planning requirements in NSA's.

7,600 ha of the north-western section of the Estate forms part of the wider Cairngorms National Nature Reserve (NNR), designated for its important mountain-top, moorland, bogland and native pinewood habitats, and their associated wide range of floral and faunal communities.

Much of the northern section of the Estate lies within the Cairngorms and the Eastern Cairngorms Sites of Special Scientific Interest, in terms of their internationally acknowledged geological and geomorphological features and further their nationally important high plateaux habitats and species, and remnant Caledonian pine forest and associated flora and fauna. The Cairngorms also constitute a Geological Conservation Review (GCR) site for their geomorphological interests.

There are five listed buildings and structures on the Estate. Mar Lodge, including the Ballroom and Stables, Victoria Bridge and Victoria Lodge are all Category 'B' listed, with Derry Lodge and Queen Victoria's Picnic Cottage Category 'C (S)' listed.

The archaeological remains of the pre-clearance farming communities in Glen Lui and Glen Dee are considered to be of national importance and a number of the township and shieling sites may be designated Scheduled Ancient Monuments by the Secretary of State for Scotland in the future.

It should be noted that Mar Lodge and its associated policies does not appear in the Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes, produced by SNH and Historic Scotland.

## **5.3 PROPOSED ESTATE MANAGEMENT INITIATIVES**

### **Introduction**

Currently, a number of different land-use management and other initiatives are either being pursued or considered throughout the Estate as part of a comprehensive estate management reassessment being undertaken by NTS. Many of these initiatives will result in some form of landscape change occurring, and could change peoples' perception and experience of the landscape.

In most cases, these initiatives are not separate issues but are inter-related or inter-dependant.

A Forest Management Plan has already been produced by Smiths Gore for the period 1995-2005. It should be noted that no agricultural practice, other than some seasonal grazing lets, has been undertaken on the Estate for a considerable period of time.

### **Landscape Conservation**

Mar Lodge Estate represents part of the core area of the Cairngorms which is recognised as one of the most important areas of natural landscape in Britain. NTS intend to conserve and enhance the landscape of the Estate to ensure that there will be no loss of landscape quality through Estate activity. This initiative will be assessed as part of a Landscape Monitoring Programme. It is recognised that the following estate initiatives all have the potential to contribute towards the landscape conservation initiative.

### **Native Woodland Restoration**

Native woodland is considered the prime habitat for conservation, restoration and expansion on the Estate. NTS's objective is to encourage the Caledonian pinewood to expand its range by natural regeneration to create a self-sustaining woodland from glen floor to the natural scrub limit, including the full variety of plant communities associated with such woodland. This restoration will be achieved by 2200, by which time the forest will incorporate four or more generations (or a continuum) of each native tree and shrub species, each properly distributed through the forest. About 30% of the forest area would comprise open space. The intention is to recreate a biodiverse forest ecosystem that, once established, will become increasingly natural over the centuries through the operation of natural influences. The major areas planned for woodland expansion are based on the glens of Quoich, Derry, Lui and Dee where remnant Caledonian woodlands are concentrated. Woodland expansion will be achieved by natural regeneration without the use of fencing. In some parts of the Estate, such as Derry, Lui, and the hillside north of Mar Lodge itself, fenced enclosures have been established in the past to assist regeneration occurring but the overriding assumption is that woodland expansion will be achieved by a substantial reduction in deer numbers and without resorting to additional fencing, tree planting or use of fertilisers.

This initiative clearly has the potential to radically change the existing landscape character of some parts of the Estate, by creating a predominantly wooded landscape in areas which are currently mostly open in character. The rate and nature of natural regeneration will determine the rate and type of landscape change which will result, dependent upon the level of success and the type of species which will establish. However, it is considered that this change will be relatively gradual over many decades.



Proposed monitoring of the success of natural regeneration and the impact of deer browsing will determine if additional measures to 'kick start' the regeneration process are required which could increase the rate of landscape change.

### **Forest Plantation Restructuring**

Throughout the Estate, there are a number of plantations which have been primarily planted for deer shelter reasons. These generally comprise geometrically shaped plantations of conifers at uniformly high stocking densities which are poorly scaled and shaped in relation to existing remnants of native woodland or the general landscape character of some areas of the estate.

Where those plantations occur in the vicinity of existing native woodlands, NTS's objective is to restructure these plantations to improve their level of biodiversity, habitat quality and native species composition in order that they may be subsumed within the expanding native woodland. In other areas, management or removal of plantations to improve or enhance landscape character will be the main objective.

Generally, restructuring will comprise a series of measures including removal of all non-native species, random felling to soften regular plantation edges and also felling within plantations to achieve a more varied tree pattern and density, and the removal of fences. NTS does not intend to undertake any major new planting, although some small-scale planting of broadleaves within plantations may be undertaken.

These measures, undertaken over a prolonged period of time, have the potential to improve the character and appearance of these plantations.

### **Moorland Management**

Heather moorlands and grasslands cover large sections of the south and west of the Mar Lodge Estate. NTS's objective is to undertake shooting activity in a manner which conserves and enhances the varied moorland habitats and plant communities and species. To achieve this objective, a series of measures will be undertaken or modified. The extent of muirburn will be reduced, particularly in wet heath areas, and its frequency amended. Drainage ditches on wet heaths will be infilled or dammed and no further grouse butts will be constructed. Existing grouse screens will be removed.

The changes to the extent of muirburn and its frequency will result in some change to the appearance of certain areas of the Estate, through either the elimination or addition of the distinctive muirburn patterning to the landscape character. Changes in ground hydrology through ditch damming/infilling may also lead to a change in ground vegetation species composition, resulting in different colours or textures in particular areas, although significant changes to the overall moorland mosaic are unlikely. Management will be generally aimed at retaining the existing open character of these moorlands and grasslands.

### **Wild Land Quality**

The wild land experience provided in parts of Mar Lodge Estate is one of the primary considerations of NTS. Wild land quality is a particularly subjective issue and is largely influenced by an individual's background, outlook and perception of the landscape.

However, various factors which can contribute to wild land quality include the degree of accessibility, the nature of the terrain, the general absence of man-made elements or human influence, the degree of remoteness from settlements or roads, the lack of other people and the presence of wildlife. In many cases, a combination of these factors may be required to produce wild land quality. It is considered that wild land quality is most likely to occur for a majority of people within the plateaux, southern moorlands and wooded glen landscape types identified earlier in this report, with increasing intensity of this experience more likely to occur towards the cores of these areas, as a result of reduced accessibility, less influence by man and a greater dominance of landscape character by physical and natural elements.

One of NTS's major objectives is to conserve and enhance this wild land quality on the Estate. Proposals aiming to achieve this objective are already in place, including dissuading and restricting use of existing vehicle tracks and the non-maintenance and restoration of hill-tracks, particularly Beinn à Bhuid. In general, there will be a gradual withdrawal of mechanical and wheeled vehicles from the core area of the Estate. Other initiatives being considered are the removal of man-made elements throughout the 3 aforementioned landscape types which are considered non-essential to the on-going management of the Estate, such as sign posts, footbridges and bothies. NTS currently have a presumption against large-scale recreational events on their countryside properties and this would apply to Mar Lodge Estate. An educational and interpretation programme promoting NTS's policy on wild land to visitors is planned, which would outline concepts such as the 'long walk in', dissuade the use of wheeled vehicles for access and provide advice on 'minimal impact' use of the Estate for recreation in terms of human waste and litter. A programme of footpath repairs throughout the Estate will also reduce the impact of man and so enhance the wild land quality.

The purpose of these proposals and initiatives is to remove or reduce the evidence of man's activities throughout parts of the Estate and so assist in strengthening the experience of wild land quality.

Conversely, proposed developments which may ease accessibility into particular parts of the Estate, or which could result in increased visitor numbers, could be seen as running contrary to the conservation and enhancement of wild land quality. It is acknowledged that developments, such as the proposed funicular development at Cairn Gorm which could facilitate access to and increase numbers of visitors on the Ben Macdui plateau, may be outwith the direct control of NTS and that therefore they can only seek to influence their provision, nature and detail.

## **Deer Management**

Mar Lodge Estate has been operated as a Highland Sporting Estate since the end of the 18th century. Current deer numbers are preventing natural regeneration of the native woodlands. Although the expansion of native woodland by natural regeneration is a prime objective of NTS, it is still their intention to pursue sporting objectives in a manner which is in harmony with the conservation of the natural heritage of the Estate.

Through substantial reductions in deer numbers, NTS intend to ensure that significant survival of regenerating seedlings occurs as part of the aim to conserve and expand native woodlands. The cull level will be particularly intensive in the glens of Quoich, Derry and Lui where deer levels will be reduced to three head per hundred hectares. This culling programme, and its relationship with the extent and rate of regeneration, will be monitored, with the cull level modified accordingly to ensure significant levels of

regeneration occurs. Associated with this culling programme will be utilising alternative winter feeding areas and gradually phasing out winter feeding in areas where as the carrying capacity of the Estate increases. The general emphasis of deer management will be to concentrate deer herds largely in the south and west of the Estate where the expansion of native woodland is not a prime objective, in the short/medium term.

The reduction of deer numbers and their location within the Estate can clearly be a contributory factor towards the encouragement of natural regeneration of native woodland and so assist in bringing about landscape change in particular areas of the Estate. However, it should also be noted that deer form an important part of the wildlife of the Estate and are a contributory factor to wild land quality.

## **Buildings Policy**

Throughout the Estate, there are a number of existing buildings in varying conditions, each fulfilling different or, in some cases, no actual use. NTS are currently in the process of finalising a Buildings Policy for the Estate which will determine appropriate long-term uses and roles for these buildings, with an associated action list related to the buildings' current condition and future use. Where the buildings' policy proposes restoration or renovation of buildings or some alteration to the appearance of the buildings, this could contribute to changing the detailed character of particular areas of the Estate.

Currently, the intentions of the Building Policy can be summarised as follows, where it is relevant to the potential for landscape change:

- Allanaquoich is to be restored to form ranger accommodation. The associated farm buildings may be used for bothy or club use with appropriate restoration although no final decision has been made yet.
- Quoich Cottage is currently being surveyed, with a long-term use yet to be established. One option being considered is to demolish the building and rebuild on the existing site.
- Queen Victoria's Picnic Cottage is to be restored given public concern over its condition, although a long-term use has yet to be established.
- Derry Lodge is to be mothballed so that its condition is not allowed to deteriorate further. A long-term use which may also require or allow rationalisation of building requirements in the immediate vicinity has yet to be established.
- The future of Red House is uncertain, particularly in relation to the issue of wild land quality. The building is currently being surveyed.
- Bynach and Geldie Lodges are considered structurally unsafe in places and are currently being surveyed. It is likely that some structural consolidation work will be undertaken.
- Victoria Lodge is to be restored, although a long-term use has yet to be established. It may be used for staff accommodation.



## **Access Policy**

The estate is of great recreational importance, providing a wide range of recreation opportunities and countryside experiences. NTS are currently developing a Visitor Management Plan for the Estate, to be implemented in 1998. A major aim of this plan will be to reconcile any possible conflicts between the sustainable management of the Estate for conservation interests and the ensurance of appropriate public access throughout the Estate.

The plan will investigate possibilities for informal recreational activities in the less sensitive areas around the Lodge and policies, whilst promoting the principle of the 'long walk in' over the wilder, remote parts of the Estate. Visitor surveys will form an important part of the development of the plan, establishing visitor numbers, their activities, intentions, expectations and attitudes, together with their potential impact on the various resources of the Estate. The plan will adopt a strategic approach as part of a wider Cairngorms initiative and consultations with neighbouring estates will be an important component in the formulation of the plan. Monitoring progress of the plan will also be undertaken to review its success in meeting its objectives. In association with the Visitor Management Plan, an Interpretive Plan will be developed which explains the meaning and significance of particular sites to the public who visit. Sensitive and planned interpretation can influence where visitors go and what they do and can therefore make a positive contribution to the achievement of the Visitor Management Plan objectives.

The access measures proposed which have the potential to change landscape character have already been discussed under Wild Land Quality.

## **Archaeology Policy**

The Estate contains a series of remains of pre-clearance settlements related to the farming communities who once inhabited Glens Lui and Dee. These remains are particularly intact and form an important cultural element of the Estate. NTS's intention is to conserve the remains by initiating measures to safeguard them from potential threats from natural and human sources. NTS also intend to enhance the understanding and presentation of the archaeological resource by the preparation of interpretive and educational material for visitors.

## **River Habitats Policy**

The River Dee and its catchments form one of the most pristine riverine habitats in Britain, recognised by the World Wide Fund for Nature in its Wild Rivers project, with one of the lowest instances of dissolved nutrients. However, riparian woodland and scrub habitat is particularly lacking in many areas, resulting in riverbank erosion and increased sedimentation. NTS intend to reduce sedimentation input into the river system by Estate activity by encouraging the establishment and expansion of riparian vegetation.

## **Wetlands Policy**

In the area south of Allanaquoich, on the floor of the glen between Craggan and the Estate boundary and beyond, NTS intend to restore a river flood plain habitat. This would be achieved by a series of measures, including the removal of existing coniferous

shelterbelts and field boundaries, controlling grazing and the blocking of drainage channels. The area would be allowed to flood as part of the natural river cycle, with no further repairs being made to the existing flood protection bankings on the north side of the river.

Dependent on the prevailing climate, this area would have a highly variable character dependent upon river and ground water levels. At particular times, large bodies of water on the floor of the glen would alter the existing character of this area considerably.

## 5.4 EXTERNAL PRESSURES

### Introduction

This section considers those issues which are outwith the direct control of the Estate but which could result in landscape change within the Estate. These issues centre around recreational activity and the activities undertaken by adjacent Estates on their own land.

### Recreation

Current trends indicate that the numbers of people engaging in all forms of outdoor recreation will steadily increase as a result of improved communications, increased mobility and additional leisure time. The popularity of the Mar Lodge Estate for hill walking, climbing and mountain biking is already well established and the existing numbers of people visiting the area to engage in these pursuits currently cause some erosion of footpaths and tracks in particular areas, such as in the Lairig Ghru (Figure 23), Coire Etchachan, Sron Riach and around the summit of Ben Macdui, and other problems associated with camping or use of bothies. In certain places at certain times, the sheer number of people present may reduce the experience of wild land quality. In popular scenic areas in Upper Deeside, such as Linn of Dee and Linn of Quoich, the worst aspects of human enjoyment of the countryside detract from the experience of these areas, with litter, fires and human waste being evident throughout most of the year. This results largely from visitors who have no empathy for the environment in which they find themselves.

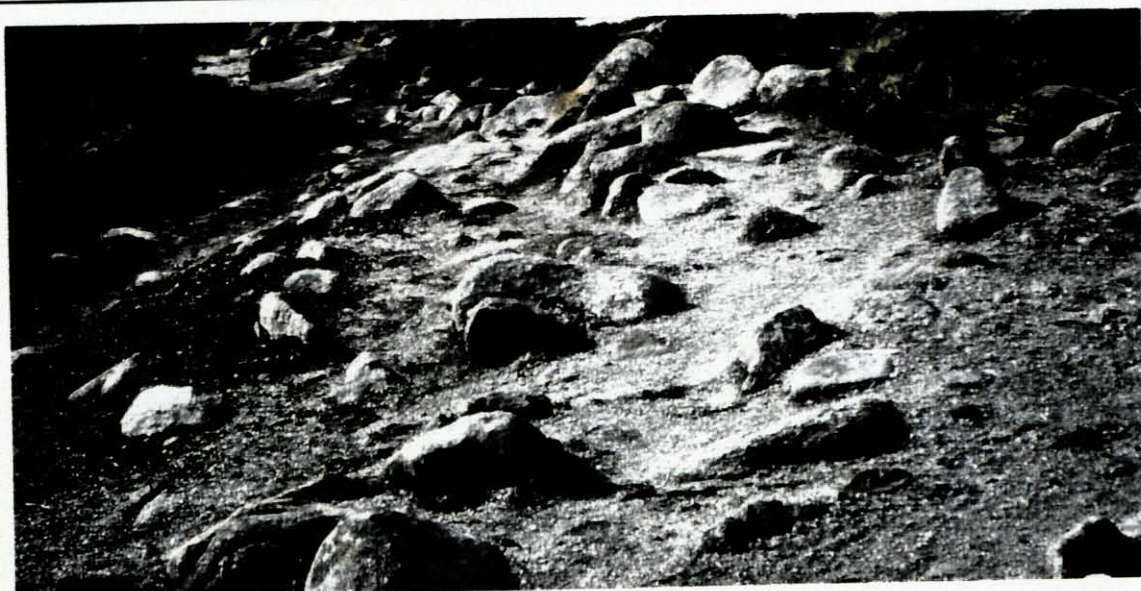


Figure 23 - Footpath erosion in the Lairig Ghru

A visitor management plan is proposed by NTS which, whilst ensuring access throughout the Estate where this does not conflict with other Estate management objectives, aims to manage visitors in order to relieve pressure on sensitive and overloaded areas. This will be accompanied by encouraging a responsible attitude towards the natural heritage resource through appropriate education and interpretation. Through visitor management, NTS aim to assist in achieving their general objective of conserving and enhancing the natural heritage resource throughout the Estate.

### **Adjacent Estates**

The previous descriptions of landscape character throughout the Estate have indicated those areas which lie outwith the Estate boundary but which make an important visual contribution to the landscape character of particular parts of the Estate.

Clearly, the management of these areas is a crucial consideration in terms of how landscape change in these areas may affect landscape character within the Estate. Whilst potential landscape change outwith the Estate could be detrimental to the landscape characters within the Estate, it must also be recognised that opportunities and positive benefits may also result from coordinated management initiatives with adjacent landowners working towards various common land-use, management and landscape objectives. This approach is particularly relevant to the issues of woodland conservation and expansion, moorland management, deer management and control of visitor pressure. The area south of the River Dee makes an important contribution to the whole setting of Mar Lodge itself and, as such, requires appropriate management to continue this contribution.

Developments proposed on land outwith the Estate may also have indirect effects on the landscape within the Estate boundary. Developments which provide improved accessibility, resulting in increased numbers of visitors could lead to a dilution of wild land quality and erosion of soils and ground vegetation, particularly in the plateaux landscape type area.

These and other forms of development may also have potential adverse visual effects which could be detrimental to landscape character within the Estate. Whilst located on land not owned by NTS, these developments could result in adverse effects on the landscape of the Estate and, as such, should therefore be classed as material considerations to the proper management of the Estate.



**CHAPTER 6**  
**LANDSCAPE STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES**



## 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous description of landscape character of the Mar Lodge Estate has indicated the wide diversity of landscape character, in terms of Landscape Types and Landscape Character Areas, throughout the Estate and which are representative of the range of landscape character contained throughout the wider Cairngorms area. The Estate also contains various other special landscape attributes, some of which occur elsewhere in the Cairngorms whilst others, such as its built heritage, gorges and waterfalls, and archaeological features, are specific to the Estate. In these respects, Mar Lodge Estate contains a greater diversity of landscape character than most other Cairngorm estates.

Geological and geomorphological processes have resulted in a series of physical features which still dominate much of the landscape character of the Estate. Man's activities, particularly in terms of agricultural development, timber production and exploitation, have been important factors in the evolution of the landscape to that which exists today, as has the sporting heritage of the Estate. The tourist popularity of the area in Victorian times, stemming from strong Royal associations with Deeside, prompted specific improvement measures in terms of built features and planting.

The landscape of the Estate is not a static feature, but will continue to evolve in its appearance and character in relation to planning, land-use and land management pressures, policies and initiatives, which all have the potential to result in landscape change. There is a need to carefully consider the landscape implications of such forces for change to ensure proper consideration of how to accommodate them without detriment to landscape character or the visual appearance of the landscape. The most important of these forces for change relates to proposed estate management initiatives currently being considered by NTS.

Should none of these estate management initiatives be adopted and implemented, it is considered that the general landscape character diversity of the Estate will gradually diminish to the detriment of the Estate. Current deer numbers would continue to prevent natural regeneration, and the remnant native woodlands would slowly die out, producing a more uniformly open landscape character over much of the Estate. Existing plantations would also produce an unbalanced and uniform woodland structure in the long term which would be poorly integrated with their surroundings. It is therefore important that an Estate Management Plan is developed which has as one of its considerations the likely effects on landscape character of particular estate management initiatives.

The Landscape Strategy outlines a strategic approach to the landscape character of Mar Lodge Estate. This strategy is then interpreted through a series of Guidelines which provide advice on the implications on landscape character of particular proposed estate management initiatives. In certain cases, the implications of different scenarios are considered, together with how these should be interpreted in landscape or visual terms in specific locations, including the landscape justification or rationale for such approaches. Where there is potential conflict in landscape terms between different initiatives, this is noted.

The landscape character of much of Mar Lodge Estate which exists today has resulted from the activity, influence and intervention of man. Man will continue to influence the visual appearance of the Estate, as a result of the estate management initiatives which are being proposed, all of which require some form of intervention into the existing situation, either by continuing, ceasing, amending or introducing specific measures. The implications of these initiatives on the existing landscape character of the Estate, in visual, spatial and cultural terms, are an important consideration in the formulation of



an overall Management Plan for the Estate.

The following sections outline the landscape implications associated with such estate initiatives, in terms of how landscape character might be conserved and enhanced or how landscape change might best be accommodated in particular areas of the Estate.

The Guidelines are organised to initially address issues which are considered to apply throughout the Cairngorms, followed by guidance on 'Estate Wide' issues which are considered to apply throughout all or large sections of the Estate. Issues which are not included in these sections and which are Landscape Type or Landscape Character Area specific are then considered and finally issues of adjacent estates which could affect landscape character within Mar Lodge Estate are considered.

## **6.2 LANDSCAPE STRATEGY**

Section 3.2 and 3.3 established the landscape character context of Mar Lodge Estate in relation to the wider Cairngorms and that the Estate is representative of the range of different landscape types typified by the Cairngorms. Other sections of Chapter 3 illustrated the wide variety and diversity of landscape character which currently exists throughout the Estate.

In response to this range and diversity of landscape character, a landscape strategy can be defined which has as its key objectives:

- **to conserve and enhance the existing landscape character diversity of the Estate.**
- **to conserve and enhance those landscape elements and attributes which make particular areas distinctive, and which make a positive contribution to existing landscape character.**

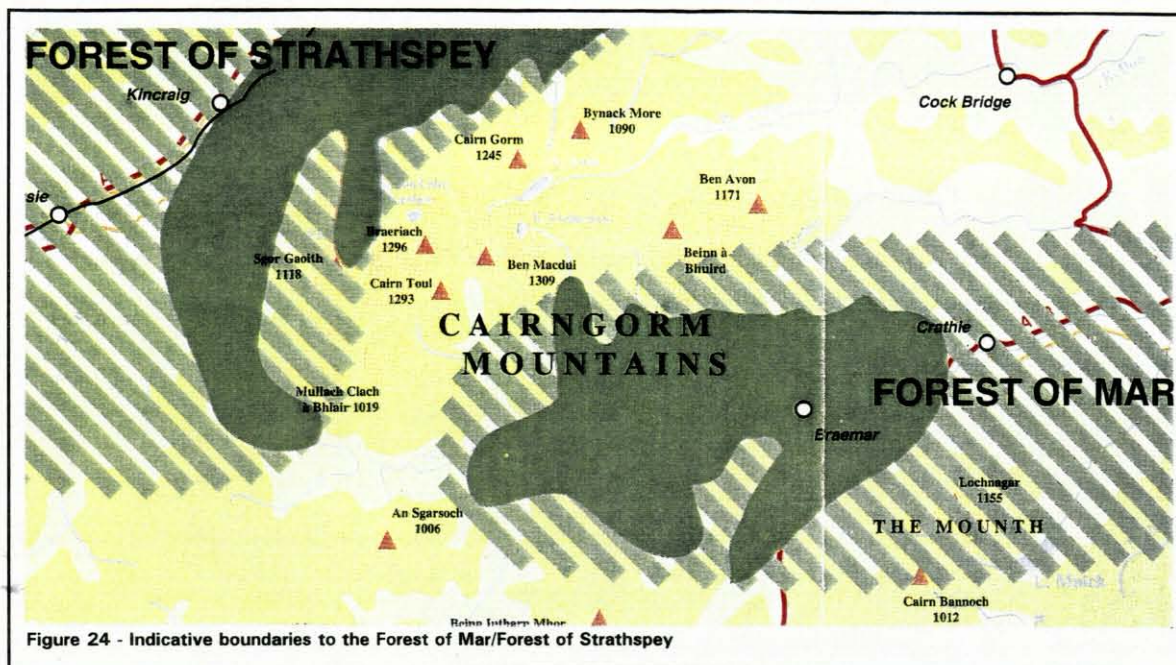
This Landscape Strategy should be achieved by adopting a series of guidelines which aim to accommodate landscape change sensitively through the application of specific policy, design and management related measures.

## **6.3 LANDSCAPE GUIDELINES**

### **• CAIRNGORMS - WIDE ISSUES**

#### **Forest of Mar/Forest of Strathspey**

One of the main recommendations of the Cairngorm Working Party was that extensive regeneration of the Caledonian Forest should be a major priority of the Cairngorms Management Plan, with the long term objective being to form two large forests - the Forest of Mar and the Forest of Strathspey. Annex 11.4 of the Cairngorms Working Party report shows indicative boundaries to the two forests (Figure 24). The Forest of Mar would extend into the lower sections of the Geldie whilst the Forest of Strathspey would extend into the upper sections of Glen Feshie, with the watershed between the Geldie and Feshie indicated as unforested. However, there is a general consensus that, in the long term, these forests would connect, although probably not as extensive woodland cover but as small-scale links of native broadleaves.



The location and scale of these proposed forests, which aim to build on one of the key landscape attributes of the area, generally encircle much of the southern and western sides of the Cairngorm massif and would compliment the gradation and transition from the managed, settled straths to the more 'naturalistic' landscape of the mountains. The current intention to restore these forests through natural regeneration accompanied by intensive deer management should result in an intricate mosaic of dense and open woodland groups, open glades and a diversity of ground vegetation which would generally enhance the existing landscape character of the glens. These forests would have great visual significance, being looked down on from many high vantage points through the Cairngorm massif, whilst also forming much of the foreground to the mountain backdrop within the straths, where they would enhance and accentuate the scale and character of the Cairngorm massif.

More detailed guidelines regarding the establishment of the Forest of Mar within Mar Lodge Estate are covered under Estate-Wide Issues.

A further scenario concerning the proposed Mar/Strathspey forests relates to the opinion that the two forests would eventually merge between the Geldie and Glen Fishie.

The Geldie currently comprises a broad, open glen of gentle, smooth, treeless slopes which has an expansive scale and general simplicity of character which does not occur elsewhere within Mar Lodge Estate. The expansive scale and bareness of the Geldie, producing vast uninterrupted panoramas to seemingly endless horizons, forms the most distinctive feature of the areas character and contributes greatly towards the sense of wild land quality which some people experience in this area. The former shooting lodges at Geldie and Bynack, despite their ruined condition, provide strong cultural associations with the sporting history of the estate. They were constructed during a period where hunting on open moorland was the acknowledged and popular approach and, as such, there is a strong inter-relationship between these lodges and the open, treeless moorlands which surround them. Whilst this sporting estate period forms a relatively short period in terms of the overall history of the Estate, its cultural significance is of particular importance. These features all combine to make the Geldie the most important area of open landscape on the Estate.

If extensive native woodland were to establish throughout the Geldie, to a level of 70% coverage as envisaged in Glens Lui, Derry, Quoich and Dee, producing a predominantly wooded appearance to the landscape, this would have the following landscape effects:

- It would result in a reduction in overall landscape character diversity throughout the Estate through the loss of such a distinctive open glen character.
- It would reduce the vast sense of scale which the Glen exhibits, fragment the existing panoramas and create a more intimate, less exposed atmosphere and, as such, would fundamentally alter the existing landscape character to its detriment.
- It would dilute the cultural inter-relationship between the former shooting lodges and the open moorland landscape and therefore would be detrimental to the landscape character of the area.

However, it is considered that it would be unlikely that such extensive woodland cover would establish in the Geldie in the long term. The existing wet heaths, soil types and continued sporting use of the area would combine to restrict woodland development to a more sporadic, patchy distribution, consisting predominantly of deciduous species such as birch, willow and rowan, with occasional pine in drier locations. This type of woodland would have a predominantly open character, which would be accentuated by the lighter, more open nature of the deciduous tree cover. As such, this type of woodland would:

- Retain the existing large-scale, expansive, open character of the Geldie and so contribute to the general landscape character diversity of the Estate.
- Retain the cultural inter-relationship between shooting lodges and open moorland.

- **ESTATE - WIDE ISSUES**

## **NATIVE WOODLAND RESTORATION**

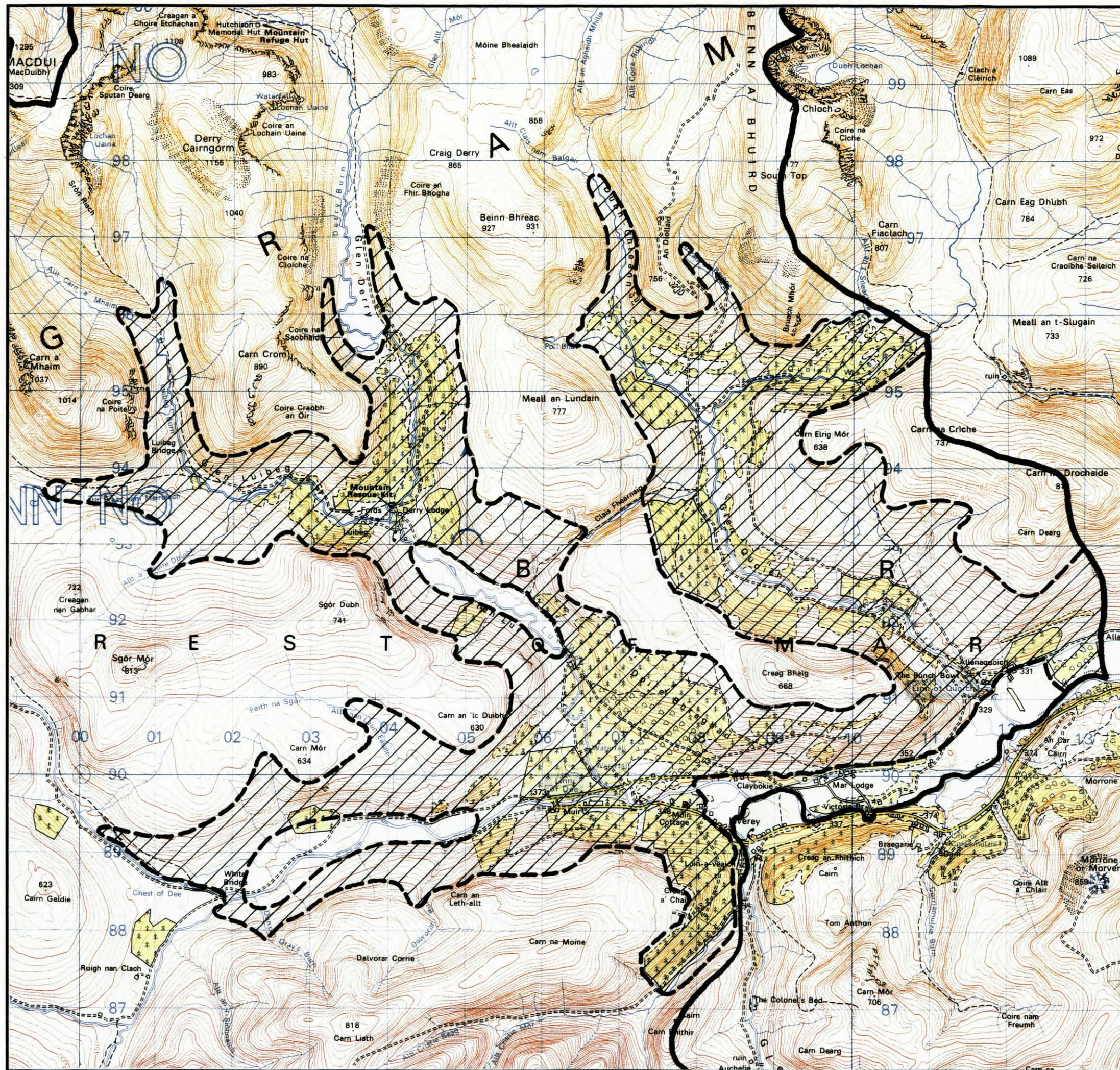
### **General**

As described in Chapter 5, native woodland restoration forms one of the major initiatives on the Estate and is consistent with the wider Forest of Mar initiative. Because of the potential for native woodland expansion to radically alter the existing character of the landscape in the long term, there is a need to define a long term vision for the extent and nature of native woodland which would be appropriate in **landscape terms** throughout the Estate. This vision may be influenced by, or in fact in certain cases dependant upon, the attitude of adjacent estates, particularly Invercauld, to the establishment and expansion of native woodlands in terms of co-ordinated management objectives.

The vision requires to consider the following issues:

- The nature of the woodland itself - native woodland should be achieved primarily by natural regeneration over a timescale of 100-200 years from trees of local origin to create a natural woodland structure with a semi-natural form, comprising open areas with scattered trees as well as more densely wooded areas and having a diverse and varied age structure and species composition, including scrub, understorey and ground vegetation. The natural tree line is considered to be around 600m, although it is somewhat higher in more sheltered locations.





**Figure 25**  
**Indicative Extent of Native Woodland Cover**

Legend



Native Woodland Cover



Scale



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- Whilst natural regeneration through significantly reduced deer numbers is the preferred and primary method of establishing native woodlands, there requires to be a flexibility of approach in order to achieve long-term native woodland cover. In the medium - long-term, this may involve some fencing if this is considered necessary to kick-start the regeneration process.
- The extent of woodland should address the following inter-related issues:
  - The need to retain and encourage landscape diversity throughout the Estate
  - The need to retain landscape elements or characteristics which form distinctive features of the existing landscape character of the Estate.

Figure 25 illustrates the indicative extent of woodland cover envisaged based on the above considerations and which are described in more detail below.

### **Landscape Diversity**

As the principal pressures currently restricting natural regeneration are removed, it is likely that uniform and relatively dense regeneration will initially become established, primarily of pioneer species such as birch and pine. This would result in a very uniform appearance to the woodland, particularly in the short-term, which may dilute the existing landscape diversity of the Estate.

However, over a prolonged period of time, this pattern would tend to become more diverse, as a result of the influence of micro-climate, soil type, moisture and fertility and grazing pressure, in terms of its density of cover and its species composition. It is likely that in each of the main glens of the Quoich, Derry, Lui and Dee, woodland cover would have a differing structure and composition in relation to these influences which would contribute to general landscape diversity throughout the Estate.

As natural regeneration begins to establish, so the general appearance of the landscape would gradually change from a predominantly open landscape in many places to a more predominantly wooded character. This change would result in an increase in the sense of visual enclosure as developing woodland begins to limit views to the surrounding landscape. It is therefore important that consideration is given to retaining, in some areas, important visual links to the surrounding landscape in order to avoid an overly oppressive character resulting.

### **Distinctive Landscape Features**

#### **General**

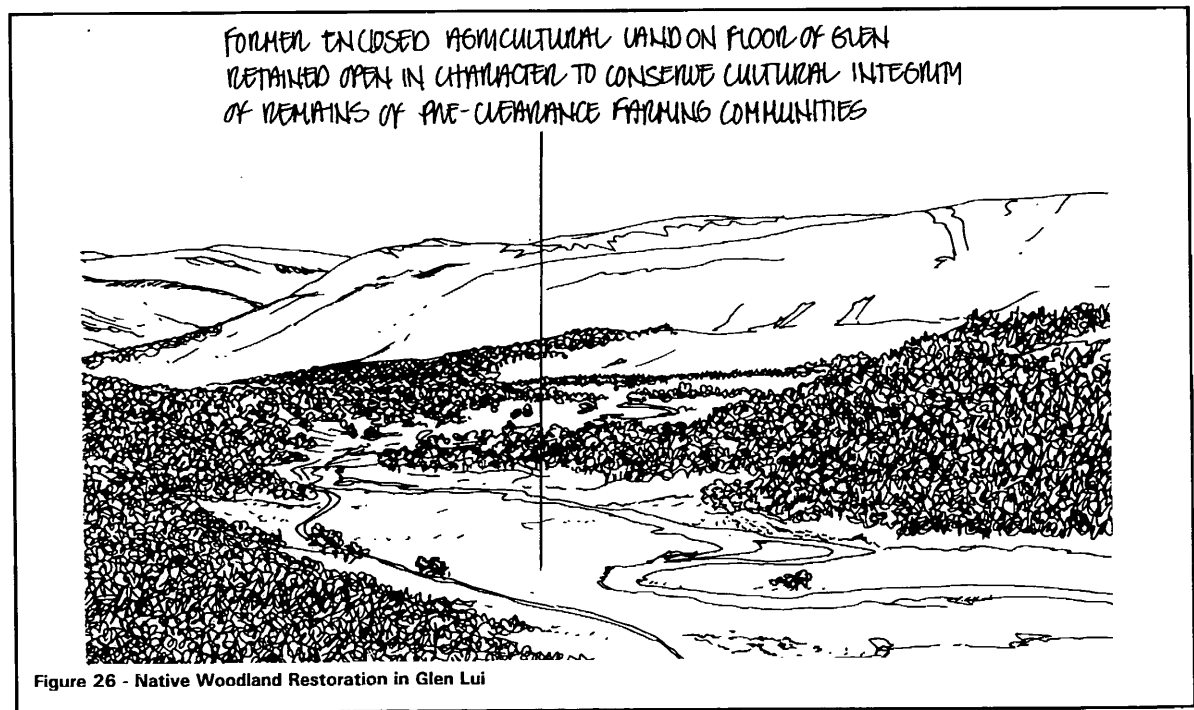
The Landscape Strategy has as its second objective, the conservation and enhancement of existing landscape elements which contribute to the distinctiveness of particular areas of the Estate. This section considers the relationship of native woodland restoration to distinctive landscape features.



In Glen Lui, the general principle of native woodland restoration would be to link physically and visually the woodlands of lower Glen Lui with those of Glen Derry/Luibeg in an area of glen currently predominantly open in character. Glen Lui contains an extensive variety of remains of pre-clearance farming communities who once occupied this glen and which form an important part of the cultural identity of the Estate. These remains are representative of a particular form of agricultural practice undertaken in the post-medieval period, which is characterised by a strong inter-relationship between houses, walled enclosures, cultivation strips and fields which extend along most of the floor of the glen. These communities existed in a landscape where the floor of the glen would have been specifically cleared of trees for agricultural purposes, creating a strong inter-relationship between these farming communities and the appearance of the landscape at that time. As such, these remains and their landscape context form an important distinctive landscape feature of the Estate.

If woodland establishes on the floor of the glen, as would naturally occur, this would dilute the cultural significance of these remains, by creating a new predominantly wooded landscape character which would be at odds to that which gave rise to and resulted from the existence of these farming communities. It would also fragment the overall integrity of these remains by breaking up the visual inter-relationship between their various parts, placing them in a landscape context which would have little relationship to that in which they specifically existed.

If the cultural integrity of these remains is to be retained, the floor of the glen between Black Bridge and Dail Rosaigh, to include all the former enclosed agricultural land, would require to remain predominantly open in character (Figure 26). This would necessitate active management to achieve this objective in order to conserve the visual inter-relationships and integrity of the farming remains and to establish a landscape context appropriate to that in which they would have existed. This predominantly open glen floor would also increase the general landscape diversity within the Estate by contrasting with other glens such as the Quoich and lower Derry where native woodland cover along the whole of the glen would be the intended dominant landscape characteristic.



Glen Dee also contains remains of pre-clearance farming communities along the floor of the glen between Creag Phadruig and Tonnagaoithe, which generally define the extent of the former enclosed agricultural land. As in Glen Lui, if the integrity of these remains is to be retained, along with their contribution to the cultural identity of the Estate, the former enclosed land should remain predominantly open and treeless in character. This again would require an active management commitment to achieve this.

The degree of intervention required to retain the integrity of the archaeological resource would be dependent upon the nature and scale of natural regeneration which occurred in the areas concerned. The degree, type and timing of intervention may require to be considered in terms of its potential effect on other issues such as wild land quality, as to how it may influence people's perception of the area. In terms of other archaeological features throughout the Estate, it is recommended that these are kept free from regenerating trees in a zone at least 20m around the feature concerned.

### Upper Glen Derry (Figure 27)

This is the only upland, flat-floored glen within the Plateaux Landscape Type. Its existing open, treeless character accentuates the large scale and distinctive flat nature of the glen floor. The open, straight character of the upper section of the glen currently contrasts with the wooded, topographically varied lower section and, as such, provides a variety of spatial interest and diversity to visitors to Glen Derry. Emerging from the existing woodland of the lower glen also marks a distinct change point in the existing landscape character between the sheltered, lower wooded glens and the bare, open mountains of the plateaux.

Documentary and physical evidence indicates that woodland existed in Upper Glen Derry in previous times, but that, in itself, is not a reason to necessarily restore that woodland cover. As grazing pressure is reduced in this area, natural regeneration will inevitably occur, visually breaking down the scale and extent of the distinctive topography of the floor of the glen and, over time, reducing the spatial and character contrast between the upper and lower glen. Retention of a predominantly open floor of the glen would necessitate intervention, the nature of which may require to be considered in terms of wild land quality.

## Other Considerations

### Deer Fencing

It is the general intention that native woodland restoration would be established without the use of deer fencing, which would be avoided except in circumstances where the success of natural regeneration had not reached anticipated levels. The visual impact of deer fencing is an obvious concern, in terms of wild land quality, particularly close to mountain landscapes where few man-made elements exist and where the physical components of the landscape are dominant features. However, the short term adverse visual effects of deer fencing may be considered acceptable in relation to the long term 200 year cycle being considered for woodland restoration and the general benefits which would accrue from native woodland restoration.

Where it is considered that provision of deer fencing is necessary to assist natural regeneration, the following issues should be considered:

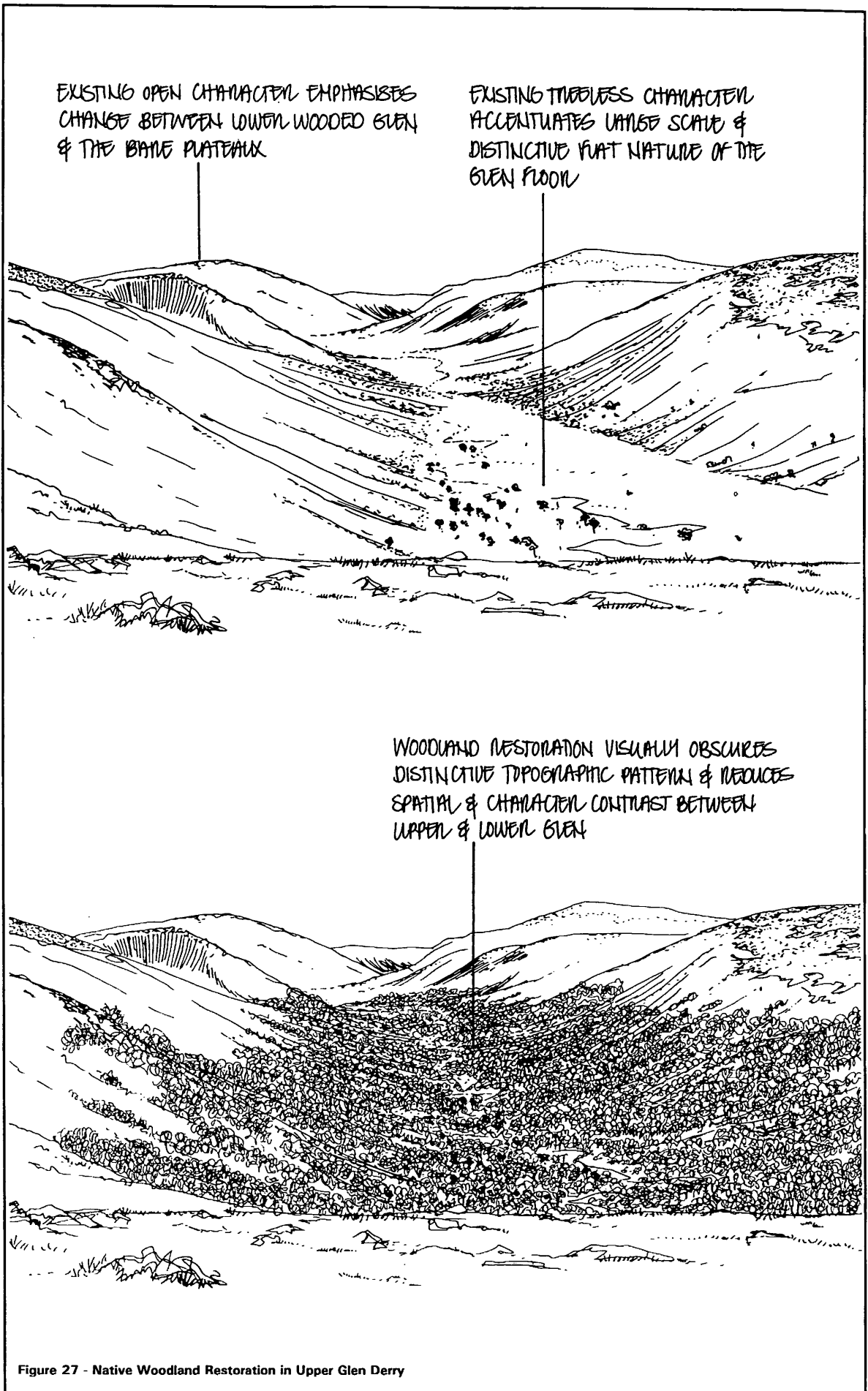


Figure 27 - Native Woodland Restoration in Upper Glen Derry



- long straight runs of fencing should be avoided, with more varied shapes and alignments being adopted which would more closely relate to the anticipated edge pattern of a native woodland.
- where possible, fence lines should be located where some degree of visual screening by existing tree groups can be obtained, although this may create potential hazards for birds.
- fencing should be removed at the earliest opportunity following the achievement of successful woodland establishment.

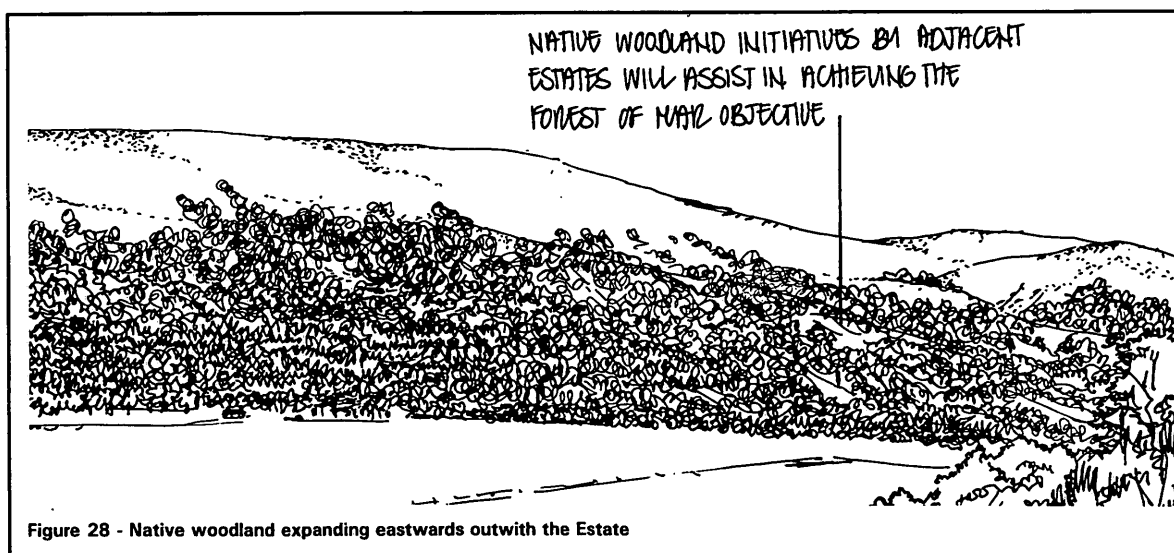
## Fire

Fire can have a considerable effect on creating conditions in which natural regeneration can occur. As a natural occurrence, it is unpredictable in its timing and extent and, where it occurs on a large scale, can have short term adverse visual effects. However, fire does form part of the natural cycle of woodland development and, in the longer term, would result in additional structural diversity to the overall pattern of woodland cover. Fire could also be used deliberately to create such diversity where considered appropriate.

## Adjacent Estates

Whilst Mar Lodge Estate itself can make a positive contribution to the creation of the Forest of Mar, its overall establishment to the extent envisaged in Common Sense and Sustainability will require similar native woodland initiatives by other landowners. Therefore, it will be necessary for adjacent estates to be sympathetic to the long term vision for the Forest of Mar and to be agreeable to management initiatives which are complementary to those pursued by NTS, in order for the natural woodland pattern to extend outwith the Estate boundary.

It is the estates of Invercauld and Mar which abound those areas of the Estate where native woodland expansion is to be concentrated and where a longer term vision for native woodland can contribute positively to the general enhancement of landscape character. In particular, the extension of native woodland eastwards from Allanaquoich towards Invercauld House and the linking of woodlands in Upper Glen Quoich and Glen an t-Slugain would produce an extensive network of native woodland which would contribute significantly to the character of these areas. (Figure 28).



## **EXISTING PLANTATIONS**

### **General**

There are currently various landscape related problems associated with the existing plantations of the Estate which were planted primarily for deer shelter purposes. These problems are:

- Many plantations are often poorly scaled in relation to the surrounding landscape, being too small in relation to the large scale of the landscape.
- Many plantations are poorly integrated with the surrounding landscape character in terms of their shape, pattern and structure.
- The use of a limited range of non-native species has resulted in a lack of overall diversity which is a characteristic of native woodlands.
- The use of higher stocking densities often results in the lack of an intricate pattern of open spaces and diversity of ground vegetation associated with native woodlands.

In order to overcome these problems, landscape guidelines should aim to promote a more naturalistic structure to these plantations in terms of species mix, age, structure and open space. In this respect, existing forestry design guidance published by the Forest Authority will form a strong basis from which to adopt and adapt particular measures to suit specific circumstances on the Estate.

### **Subsumption into Native Woodlands**

Where existing plantations are in close proximity to remnant native woodlands and are of a large scale in Estate terms, such as in Glens Quoich (Figure 29) and Lui, it would benefit the general landscape character of these areas if these plantations are subsumed and integrated into the wider native woodland restoration. The intention would be that of a gradual merging of native woodland and plantation by:

- varied scales of selective and clear felling penetrating towards the centres of the plantations to allow natural regeneration to expand into these clearings and to also vary the shape of the plantations generally.
- the creation of open areas within the plantations.
- the removal of non-native species.

These measures should not be carried out at the same time but a mixed programme of operations developed with the objective of achieving a more diverse age balance and structure in the long term. The detail of these measures would be related to topographic, soil and hydrological characteristics.

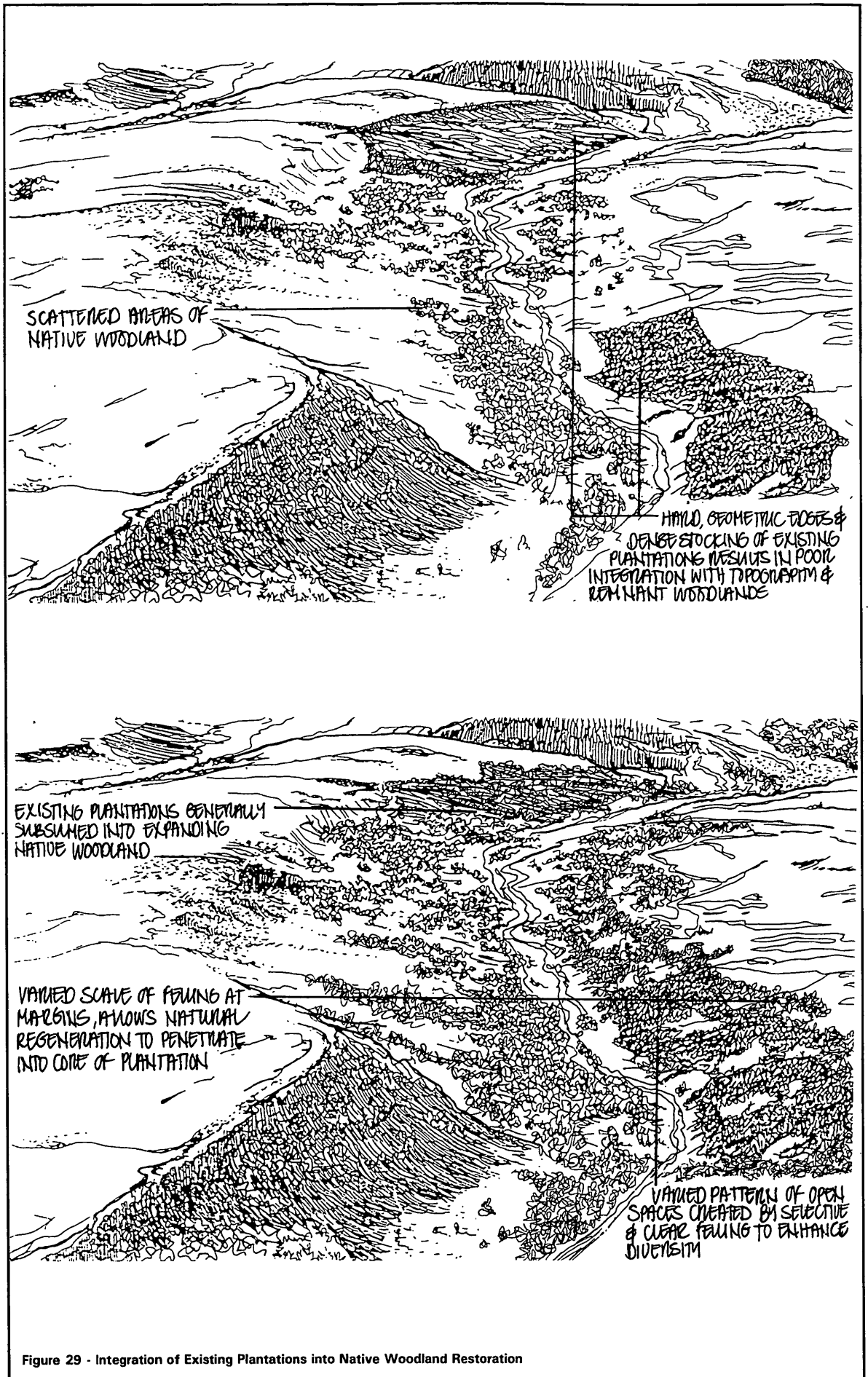


Figure 29 - Integration of Existing Plantations into Native Woodland Restoration



## **General Landscape Improvement Measures**

Reference has already been made to how existing plantations could be integrated into the expanding native woodland and these principles are also appropriate to the general landscape improvement of other plantations. In addition, other principles which should be adopted are:

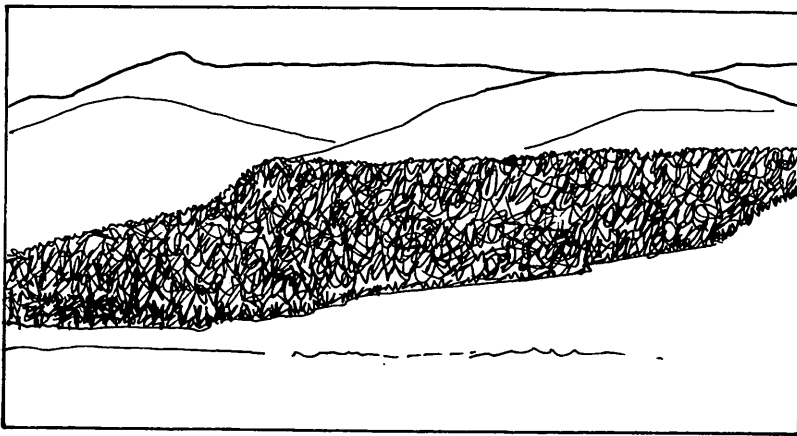
- Ameliorate geometric edges by:
  - Undertake felling at the margins to create a varied shape of plantation. Varying the scale and extent should be an important consideration and should be related to the overall scale and shape of the plantation.
  - Remove existing fencing to allow deer browsing which, in the longer term, could modify the shape and pattern of tree cover within the plantation.
- Improve the general structure and diversity by:
  - Undertake clear and selective felling within the main body of the plantations to create a pattern of open spaces throughout the plantation which will allow opportunities for new species to colonise and so assist diversity. Again, the scale, extent and shape of these felling patterns will be important considerations.
  - Remove non-native species such as lodgepole pine, Japanese larch and sitka spruce by clear felling and selective thinning where they do not make a valuable contribution to landscape character in terms of overall diversity or distinctive elements.

These measures, (Figure 30), should ensure that, in the long term, there is a full integration of plantations into the general landscape character of the Estate. In many cases, thoughtful programming of these various measures, and their detailed extent related to topographic, soil and hydrological characteristics, will be required to ensure a gradual transition occurs to a more diverse woodland cover in terms of species, age structure, pattern and density.

## **Plantations West of Linn of Dee**

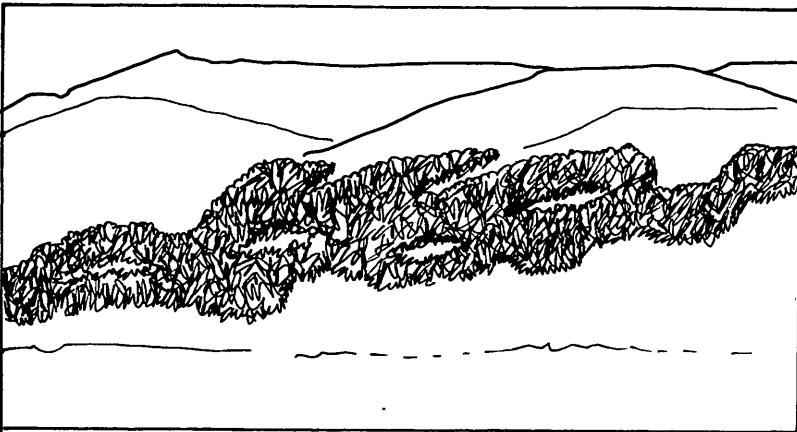
These plantations exhibit many of the landscape related problems outlined above, particularly being poorly scaled and integrated into the surrounding landscape, and as such appear as isolated elements which are unrelated to their surroundings. Two scenarios to resolve these problems can be considered:

- Remove plantations where they are not considered to be essential in terms of deer management. This issue will require rigorous consideration. Removal can be achieved in two ways:
  - Clear felling, including removal of stumps. This would produce a very rapid change in character from plantation to open landscape. In the short-term, it is acknowledged that the outline of the plantation would remain clearly visible due to a strong contrast in ground vegetation colour and texture with the adjacent areas, as evidenced by the clear felled plantation south-west of Linn of Dee. However, over a period of around ten years, there will gradually be



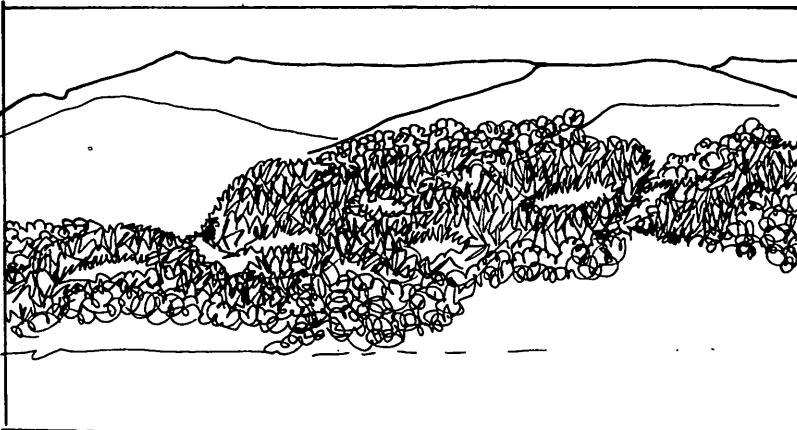
SINGLE STAND PLANTATION WITH GEOMETRIC EDGES & WHICH IS POORLY SCAVED IN RELATION TO SURROUNDING LANDFORM

EXISTING SITUATION



- VARIOUS SCALE OF FELLING AT EDGES TO CREATE SHAPE WHICH RELATES MORE DIRECTLY TO LANDFORM PATTERN
- FELLING TO CREATE GULLIES/ CLEANSINGS TO ENHANCE DIVERSITY
- REMOVE NON-NATIVE SPECIES
- REMOVE FENCING TO ALLOW BROWSING

STAGE ONE



ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW NATIVE SPECIES ENHANCES DIVERSITY OF PLANTATION & FURTHER 'SOFTENS' FORMER GEOMETRIC EDGES

UNDERSTAKE FURTHER CLEANSING SELECTIVE FELLING AT EDGES & WITHIN PLANTATION TO CREATE FURTHER DIVERSITY & INTEGRATION

STAGE TWO

Figure 30 - Principles of Landscape Improvement Measures to Existing Plantations

an influx into the former area of the plantation by plant species from the surrounding area, resulting in these areas being gradually merged into the surrounding vegetation pattern. This approach would assist in enhancing the existing landscape character by removing elements which currently detract from the strong open moorland character of the area.

- Progressive selective thinning over a prolonged period of say 30 -50 years to ultimately remove the plantations. This would allow a more gradual transition from existing plantation to open landscape. Many of the principles outlined below regarding modifying the appearance of plantations would be applicable to this approach. This approach would also enhance the existing landscape character in the long term.
- Considerably expand plantations to create a better, more appropriate integration with the surrounding landscape character. It is considered that the only viable way to achieve this objective would be through substantial new planting being undertaken, in association with selective thinning. This planting would require to at least double the existing area of the plantations to achieve an appropriate scale of plantation in relationship to the scale of the surrounding landform. To the immediate west of Linn of Dee, the joining of plantations should be a desirable objective. Any new planting proposals should be rigorously subject to the highest standards of forestry design practice.

However, this scenario would conflict with the earlier general intention of retaining a predominantly open moorland landscape in this area of the Estate, as well as emphasising the influence of man in an area with a strong wild land quality.

## **WILD LAND QUALITY**

The conservation and enhancement of wild land quality throughout parts of the Estate is one of the primary objectives of NTS, as discussed in Chapter 5. In order to achieve this objective, it requires the consideration of measures which aim to remove or reduce the various influences or evidence of man's activities in the area, in order to give greater prominence to the physical characteristics of the landscape.

If the following guidelines are adopted, there would be a general conservation and enhancement of wild land quality throughout the Estate:

- Built Elements
  - No new buildings, bridges, signs, cairns or similar elements should be constructed throughout the plateaux, southern moorland and wooded glens landscape type areas.
  - To reduce the general clutter and variety of built development around Derry Lodge, the barn, the timber shed accommodating the mountain rescue post and Bob Scott's bothy should be removed, unless there are overriding estate management reasons for their retention.



- The bothies of Corrou and the Etchachan Hut (Figure 31) form obvious built elements within areas where strong wild land quality is likely to exist. Their removal would enhance wild land quality, although each form an important element of the cultural history of the Estate. There may also be safety and management reasons for their retention. Possibilities may exist for modifying their appearance, in terms of colour, external materials etc, so that their perceptibility within the wider landscape context is reduced. Detailed relocation may be an alternative consideration in conjunction with this. The Garbh Coire bothy, which is covered in boulders, and as such is visually difficult to detect, is not considered to represent an obvious man-made feature and therefore does not necessarily detract from the experience of wild land quality. This treatment, however, would not be suitable for Corrou or the Etchachan Hut, due to their larger size, as it would create the impression of a large-scale cairn.



Figure 31 -The Etchachan Hut is an obvious built element in a remote, wild setting

- the removal of all footbridges within the plateaux landscape type area, together with footbridges immediately beyond Derry Lodge, in Glen Derry and Glen Luibeg would reduce the number of man-made elements and would contribute to the 'long walk in' concept. At Glen Derry, this measure could also contribute to deterring some visitors from progressing deeper into the mountain core and so assist in reducing visitor pressure. Safety issues and the historical associations of some footbridges may be a consideration in determining their removal.
- the removal of all signs outwith the Upper Deeside landscape type area would reduce the number of man-made elements throughout the Estate (Figure 31). Large-scale cairns of boulders should also be removed or dismantled.





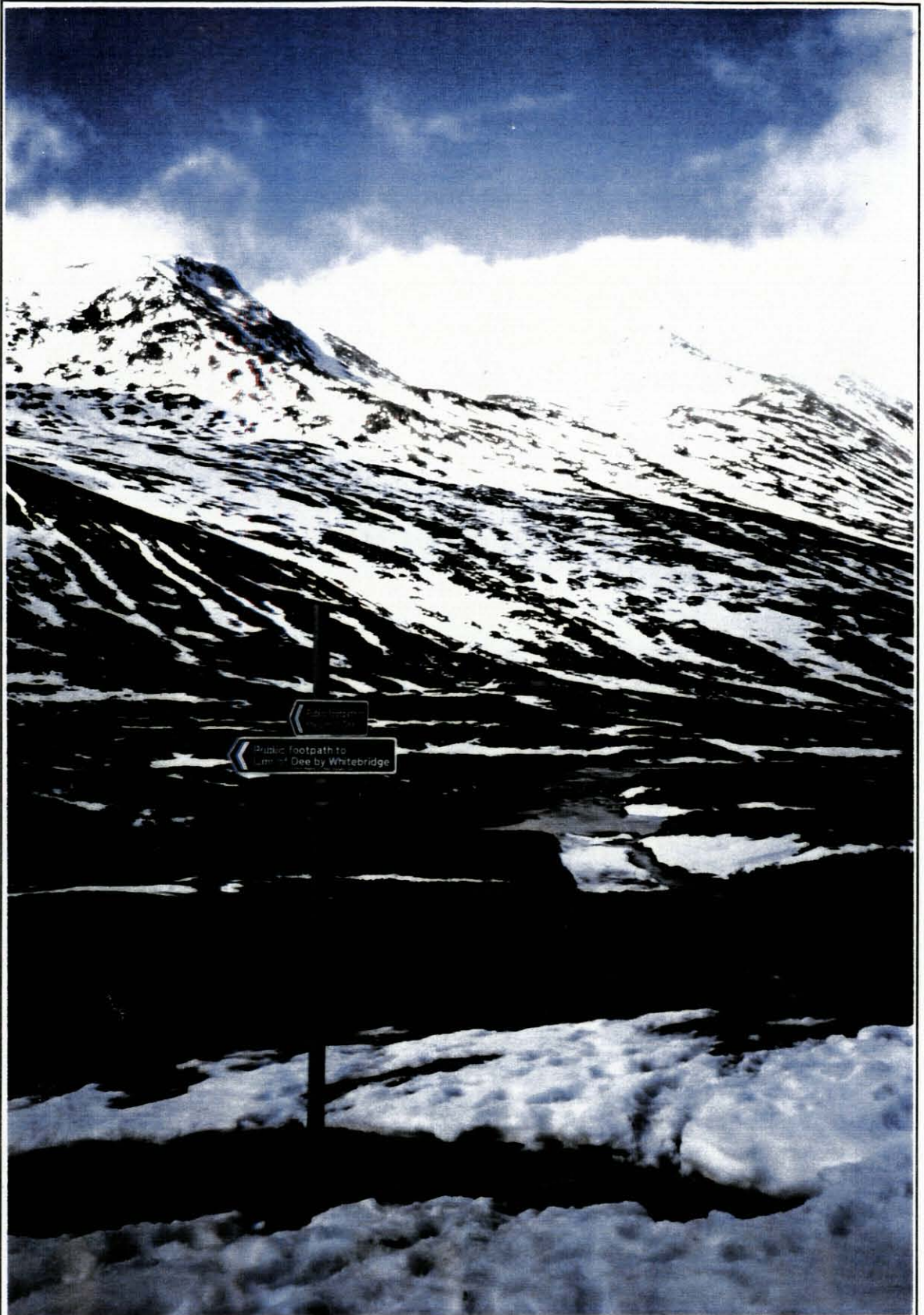


Figure 32 - Existing signs in remote areas compromise wild land quality





- Access tracks and footpaths:
  - The use of all access tracks throughout the Estate by vehicles should cease except for essential estate management operations or emergency use.
  - The following access tracks should be removed and revegetated unless there are overriding estate management reasons for their retention:
    - The Beinn á Bhuird track beyond the ford in Glen Quoich
    - The track on the east side of Glen Quoich from beyond Linn of Quoich
    - The Glen Derry track beyond Derry Lodge
    - The Glen Luibeg track beyond Luibeg Cottage
    - The Glen Dee track beyond White Bridge
    - The Glen Geldie track beyond Red House
    - The Allt Cristie Beag burn track outwith the existing forest

The techniques for revegetating these tracks should adopt the general principles outlined in the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology report for Beinn á Bhuird, although with modifications to suit particular local circumstances. However, it should be acknowledged that the timescales quoted in this report for complete and successful revegetation of the Beinn á Bhuird track appear excessively optimistic, in terms of the timescales which have been taken for adjacent soil and vegetation characteristics to develop and evolve to their current state. The initial revegetation measures outlined would reduce the degree of visual contrast between the existing tracks and their surroundings, but a visual contrast would still remain as a result of the differing colour and texture between the revegetated track area and adjacent vegetation. It is considered that in visual terms, it would take a prolonged period of time before the revegetation of existing tracks would be fully integrated into their surroundings and, until such time, they would remain discernable elements in the landscape. At a detailed level, the issue of scale of recreating scree patterns and boulder fields across the line of the tracks should be a prime consideration in relation to adjacent scree patterns and shapes.

- A substantial and on-going programme of footpath repairs should be undertaken through the plateaux landscape type area. The general objectives should be to reduce footpath widths, create a footpath surface which is appropriate for anticipated levels of usage, provide adequate drainage and avoid an obvious 'engineered/constructed' appearance, all as a general contribution towards reducing the visual impact of these footpaths, and so contributing to general landscape conservation.
- Mountain bikers should be dissuaded where possible from using areas off remaining Estate access tracks. The willingness of adjacent Estates to assist in the achievement of this objective will be an important consideration.
- Recreational flying
  - Low level recreational flying over the Estate by planes or helicopters is totally incompatible with the concept of wild land quality and NTS should pressurise for it to cease, by voluntary or statutory measures, especially over the plateaux landscape type area. Emergency helicopter access for mountain rescue purposes is not considered to fall within the suggested restriction.

- Mountain training

- NTS should not grant permission for mountain training use of the plateaux landscape type area by large organised parties except where the areas particular characteristics can be comprehensively demonstrated as being essential for such training, in recognition of the adverse effect that overcrowding can have on the experience of wild land quality.
- In relation to the above, NTS should identify areas where particular mountain training activities could be undertaken responsibly without detriment to the issue of wild land quality or the natural heritage of the Estate generally.

- Events

- NTS should not grant permission for sponsored walks, organised hill runs or other large-scale recreational events involving significant numbers of people in recognition of their adverse effect on the experience of wild land quality.

- Other Issues

- The retention of tree stumps following tree felling perpetuates the activity of man and may adversely affect the experience of wild land quality. Tree stump removal would, in the long term, provide less evidence of man's activity in the area.
- Muirburn can sometimes create strongly artificial patterning of moorland which may adversely affect the experience of wild land quality.

## **DERELICT BUILDINGS**

Currently, various derelict building make differing contributions to landscape character in particular parts of the Estate. These differences range from Bynack and Geldie Lodges, whose ruined character emphasises the remoteness of their location, to Queen Victoria's Picnic Cottage which, because of its ease of accessibility, attracts vandalism, litter and graffiti which detracts from the scenic attraction of the Linn of Quoich. The cultural relevance of particular buildings and their potential effect on wild land quality are also material considerations in developing guidelines for these buildings.

- Derry Lodge - as a Listed Building and considering the building's historical and cultural associations, this building's condition must not be allowed to decline further. Until a long-term, sustainable use of the building can be established, it should be secured, made weather-tight and structurally stable. Long-term use of this building should not compromise the wild land quality of the Estate in terms of increased vehicular access and numbers of visitors.
- Bynack Lodge/Geldie Lodge - If these ruins were stabilised in their current condition, including any minor rebuilding to achieve structural integrity as necessary, they would retain their visual discernability within such a large-scale open landscape and so retain the cultural inter-relationship between them and the surrounding landscape. Allowing these structures to gradually collapse, so that they are not longer visible at distance, would result in this inter-relationship being lost.



- Red House - this building currently attracts considerable abuse and litter, despite its relatively remote location and, as such, is detrimental to the appearance and experience of the surrounding area. Its removal would contribute positively to enhancing wild land quality in this area. However, it is an example of a specific vernacular building type which is becoming increasingly rare and is a tangible remnant of the hunting legacy of the Estate. It therefore has a certain cultural value which requires to be considered. The building also provides an element of scale in an expansive landscape, although from most approaches it is largely hidden from view by an existing plantation or topography until relatively close by.
- Allanaquoich - despite its semi-derelict condition, this building complex makes a positive contribution to this section of Upper Deeside by continuing a pattern of isolated individual buildings on the north side of the glen between the Mar Lodge policies and Invercauld House. Restoration would enhance this contribution. If the building should remain predominantly white in colour, it would retain its strong visual contrast with its backcloth. The existing large-scale hayshed is of no architectural value and it intrudes into the floor of the Glen. Its removal would enhance the landscape character of the Allanaquoich haughlands.
- Queen Victoria's Picnic Cottage - due to its ease of accessibility, this building suffers considerable problems of vandalism, litter, human waste and graffiti which reduces the quality of visitors' experience of the scenic character of Linn of Quoich (Figure 33). The building is of particular cultural significance, warranting restoration and long-term use when it could then make an outstanding contribution to the overall character of Linn of Quoich. If restoration occurs prior to the establishment of a long-term use, measures must be in place which prevent abuse of the building re-occurring.

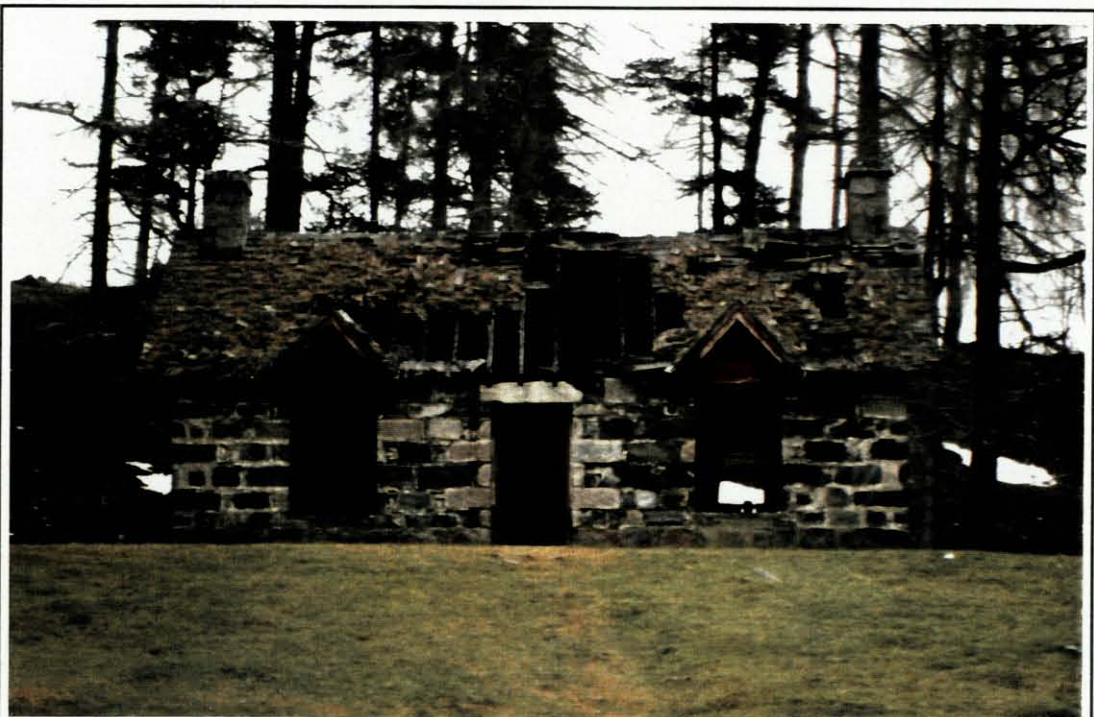


Figure 33 - Queen Victoria's Picnic Cottage currently detracts from the Linn of Quoich's character

- Quoich Cottage - this building currently makes little contribution to its surroundings due to its architectural style and condition. Its removal or restoration would enhance the approach to Linn of Quoich for visitors.
- Victoria Lodge - this semi-derelict building cannot be considered separately from Victoria Bridge, to which is directly related in location, alignment and architectural style. Due to its prominent location beside the Linn of Dee road, it currently detracts from the general visitor experience of the area. Restoration of the building could allow it to make an important contribution to the character and visitors impression of Upper Deeside.

## **MOORLAND MANAGEMENT**

The management of moorland can influence its visual appearance and therefore its contribution to landscape character. Issues such as the scale and extent of muirburn, with its distinctive patterning, and drainage characteristics contribute to the appearance of moorland areas, although muirburn can often detract from wild land quality. Sporting activity on the moorlands is also an aspect of the Estate's cultural history.

In terms of moorland management, the following guidelines should be considered:

- in the Dalvorar landscape character area, the visually simple and consistent cover of heather should be retained to emphasise the smooth, rounded landform pattern which is one of the area's main characteristics.
- muirburn on the moorlands of the wooded glens landscape type area should cease to allow the extent of native woodland restoration to increase. This would also avoid a visual intensity of textural and colour contrasts throughout this area.
- the intensity of muirburn should be gradually reduced towards the edges of areas concerned to achieve a transition of patterning between the core area and areas where muirburn is not undertaken.
- Small-scale vegetation changes resulting from ditch infilling are unlikely to result in a significant change to the appearance of the landscape.
- sporting activity is part of the Estate's history and should continue where it can be demonstrated as being compatible with other Estate objectives such as the conservation of wild land quality.
- in order to retain and enhance wild land quality, no further grouse butts should be constructed and stalking/shooting should not be accessed by vehicle.

## **DEER MANAGEMENT**

Historically, deer numbers on the Estate have prevented natural regeneration of native woodlands and the current deer numbers seriously conflict with NTS's prime objective to restore the native woodlands of the Estate. In order to accomplish this objective, and so achieve landscape enhancement benefits, measures are required to ensure that deer numbers are in ecological balance with their habitat and at a level which ensures that significant natural regeneration of woodland occurs. These measures should include:

- a significant reduction in deer numbers in the Quoich, Derry and Lui glens where the restoration of native woodlands is the primary objective. This should be achieved by:
  - deer culling
  - phasing out winter feeding and the fertilising of deer greens
- maintaining lower deer numbers in the wooded glens landscape type area than in the southern moorlands landscape type area. The southern moorlands landscape type area can accommodate higher deer populations than the wooded glens landscape type area as an important contributing measure in retaining the generally open landscape character of the area, whilst allowing significant natural regeneration to occur in the wooded glens. In the medium-longer term, deer numbers may become more balanced throughout the Estate.

Deer numbers and management can therefore be used as a method of achieving landscape conservation and enhancement objectives, specifically in terms of the restoration of native woodland. Without this intervention, it is considered unlikely that such restoration could be achievable.

Mar Lodge Estate has been used wholly as a sporting estate since the end of the 18th century and, as such, sporting activity forms an important historical and cultural component of the Estate. However, in recent times, the introduction of vehicle access tracks, and the use of vehicles generally, to facilitate stalking has resulted in visual impacts and led to a reduction in wild land quality in certain parts of the Estate. Whilst it is important in cultural terms that the tradition of sporting activity continues on the Estate, it should only be undertaken where it can be clearly demonstrated that this is in a manner which is in harmony with the conservation and enhancement of wild land quality. Where there is potential conflict between these issues, there should be a presumption that wild land quality considerations should take priority.

## **SPECIFIC LANDSCAPE TYPE/CHARACTER AREA ISSUES**

### **Upper Deeside**

#### **General**

There are a variety of issues in the Upper Deeside landscape type area which have the potential to change the character of the area. Due to the generally smaller-scale extent and nature of these issues, a series of more prescriptive measures can be outlined aimed at conserving and enhancing the particular characteristics of this area.

#### **Built Development**

- NTS should monitor all planning applications within the Upper Deeside landscape type area for proposed new built development and building renovations/restorations.
- NTS should presume that no further new built development should be permitted unless an absolute need can be unequivocally demonstrated. Such a need must also be subject to the fullest rigours of the planning process in terms of location, siting, contribution to the existing pattern of built development, scale of development and architectural style/treatment. A contribution towards the Forest of Mar initiative through associated substantial native tree planting and management should also form



a prerequisite of any planning approval through a Section 50 Agreement.

- NTS should ensure that the highest standards of appropriate design and workmanship are achieved in any building renovation/restoration projects.

#### Car Parking

- There should be a general presumption against the provision of new designated car parks.
- Informal car parking along the Linn of Dee and Quoich roads should be deterred by appropriate edge of road treatments such as boulder clumps, stacks of large cut timbers etc.
- Where parking demand increases to levels where further provision is unavoidable, other alternative solutions such as shuttle bus systems from Braemar should be investigated to avoid such provision.
- Where further or alternative provision is necessary, the existing car park at Linn of Dee (Figure 34) provides a good model of the principles (Figure 34) which should be adopted.
  - The initial preference should be to expand the existing car park at Linn of Dee.
  - New car parks should be located in existing coniferous woodland, and not in open glades or pastures, in order to reduce visual impacts from surrounding areas, particularly high level vantage points.
  - Car parks should be located close to the existing road layout.
  - Car parks should adopt an informal layout of small-scale separate bays or courts.
  - With the exception of the entrance, surfacing should be gravel with timber edging/divisions. Concrete kerbing is not considered to be an acceptable material in such a rural location.



Figure 34 - the Linn of Dee car park forms a good model for future parking provision

- At Linn of Quoich, two alternative scenarios could be considered:
  - provision in the existing Craggan plantation, with an associated footpath link to the Quoich, possibly using the existing road in a downgraded capacity.
  - provision in new woodland around the existing informal parking area, established utilising fencing and planting if considered necessary.

### Camping

- Provision of a designated camping site may form part of the Visitor Management Plan currently being formulated. The intention through this provision would be to attempt to reduce pressure from wild camping on more sensitive locations towards the core of the Estate. Should such provision be required, the following principles should be adopted:
  - it should be well screened from surrounding roads and properties by topography or existing woodland;
  - it should either utilise an existing open area within woodland or a specifically created opening within woodland.

### Signage

- Careful consideration should be given to the need for and location of new signage to avoid a proliferation of signage developing which would detract from the rural character of the area.
- Where new signage is warranted, it should incorporate any existing signage where possible.
- A co-ordinated system of signage is required, having a common, coherent style and sense of identity.
- Detailed location and attractive, easily understood layout and information are major considerations to successful signage. A high percentage of graphic information should be considered essential. Systems which rely on the use of bright colours and which are over-scaled should be avoided. Fixing signs to trees is damaging to their health and can weaken their structure and should be avoided.
- The signage content should place a strong emphasis on interpretation of the surrounding landscape, together with the promotion of a strong ethic of care towards the landscape, in terms of responsible enjoyment, appreciation and usage. The rationale behind the principle of the 'long walk in' and other conservation-orientated initiatives should be endorsed.
- NTS should consider, in conjunction with the Local Authority, providing interpretation signage outwith the boundary of the Estate, ie the two high level laybys on the Linn of Dee road which provide popular viewpoints of the southern and eastern sections of the Estate.

## Distinctive Planting

There are areas in Upper Deeside, such as the Linns of Dee and Corriemulzie, where non-native tree species introduced in the 19th century make a major contribution to the character of the area, by producing a diverse and distinctive mix of tree species and creating a distinct sense of place. Where levels of browsing and human usage are preventing natural regeneration of these areas occurring, which would in the long term result in the loss of their distinctive qualities, a planting programme should be implemented which retains the diverse species mix of these areas and also improves the age structure of these plantings generally. This principle should also apply to the larch at Linn of Quoich which lies on the margins of the Mar Lodge policies.

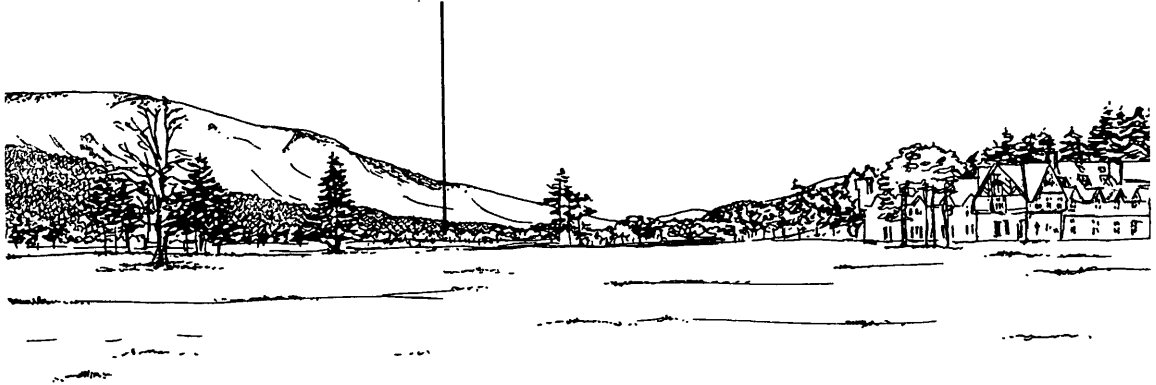
## Mar Lodge Policies

Whilst not included by SNH and Historic Scotland as a designed landscape in their Inventory of Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes, the policy plantings, grounds and other built features around Mar Lodge provide an important contribution to the visual appearance and character of the area and to the cultural heritage of the Estate. In order to conserve and enhance the role that these elements currently make to the character of the area, the following guidelines should be adopted:

- The policy plantings should be subject to a long-term management plan aimed at retaining the general diversity of tree species and expanding the age structure of the plantings. Some recent replanting has been undertaken, but generally in confined spaces where overshadowing will restrict growth and establishment. Some selective thinning may be appropriate to achieve the above aims.
- Small clumps of and individual non-native and native specimen trees should be introduced into the open parkland around the Lodge to continue the tradition of isolated tree groups within a predominantly open parkland character.
- The recently planted tree belt to the south-west of the Lodge close to the north bank of the River Dee will in the long-term reduce the extent of the existing open vista over the Inverey pastures to the hills beyond. The retention of this open vista was a particular consideration of the original layout of the policy plantings and this recent planting contradicts this historical intention. Whilst historical precedent is, in itself, not a reason to dictate current activities, the extensive open prospect to the south-west of the Lodge makes an important contribution to the whole setting of the Lodge and as such would be significantly reduced as this planting matures (Figure 35).
- The recently planted avenue of trees leading to the Stable Block:
  - introduces a formal planted element into policy plantings which are characterised by an informal arrangement and layout. The avenue's linear geometry is at odds with the softer geometry of the policy plantings and is also uncharacteristic of the landscape character of the Deeside Estates generally. This formal planted element, when mature, will be particularly noticeable when seen from adjacent hillsides as it cuts across the open parkland, creating a strong geometric contrast with the adjacent more informal plantings.



THE ORIGINAL LAYOUT OF POUGH PLANTINGS CONSCIOUSLY  
 MAINTAINED AN EXTENSIVE OPEN PROSPECT TO THE SOUTH - WEST  
 TO THE SURROUNDING HILLS



THE SENSE OF EXTENSIVE GRASSLANDS EXTENDING OUT OVER  
 THE INVEREM PASTURES WAS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF  
 THE ORIGINAL PARKLAND LAYOUT

WHEN MATURE, THE NEW PLANTING/TREE BELT WILL OBSCURE  
 THE MIDDLE GROUND & REDUCE THE EXTENSIVENESS OF THE  
 OPEN PROSPECT TO THE SURROUNDING TREES



THE NEW TREE BELT WILL VISUALLY CONTAIN THE  
 PARKLAND AREA & REDUCE ITS APPARENT  
 EXTENSIVENESS

Figure 35 - Effect of recent tree belt planting on the setting of Mar Lodge

- when mature, the avenue will spatially divide the extensive open parkland which forms the setting for the Lodge, reducing the current sense of scale and extent of this parkland to the east when viewed from the Lodge.
  - the avenue comprises lime trees which are an uncharacteristic species in Deeside and the Scottish Highlands generally. The shape, colour and texture of these trees will not, therefore, relate to the general planting character of the area.
- The former garden area, now semi-derelict, between the Lodge and the Stable Block, forms a historically important element of the policies, although little evidence of its layout and style exists, except for the existence of parterres defined by clipped box hedges in the 1930's. Restoration of the garden would enhance the detailed setting of the Lodge and Stable Block. The purpose and detailed design of this garden may be influenced by the long-term proposals for the use of Mar Lodge itself.
  - The forecourt to Mar Lodge currently comprises a large area of asphalt edged with pre-cast concrete kerbs which is considered inappropriate in the immediate curtilage of a Listed Building. If the following measures were to be undertaken, the detailed setting of the Lodge would be enhanced:
    - reduce the area of asphalt in extent consistent with allowing appropriate vehicle movements.
    - apply a gravel surface dressing which is appropriate to the appearance of the Lodge to remaining areas of asphalt.
    - remove all concrete kerbs. If kerbing is considered necessary, it should comprise natural stone edgings laid flush or at a batter between roadway and adjacent surfaces. There should be a strong relationship in colour and texture between kerbing and gravel surface dressing.
    - review parking provision and its location for the Lodge to determine the most appropriate measures. This may be influenced by the long-term proposals for the use of the Lodge.
  - Victoria Bridge forms an important local focal feature due to the contrast of its white painted structure with the predominantly evergreen wooded backdrop when seen from most directions. The bridge should continue to be painted white to retain this contrast. Any maintenance work should respect the bridge's strong Victorian style of design.

### **Allanaquoich Haughland**

The Allanaquoich haughland forms a visually important area of the Estate, being looked down on from the Linn of Dee road and forming the foreground to the first view of the Estate and its Cairngorms backdrop for many visitors. The wide, open, uniformly flat floor of the glen is a distinctive characteristic of the area. However, its overall extent and scale is visually diluted by several narrow, coniferous shelterbelts. The small scale and linear character of these shelterbelts, which are isolated elements on the floor of the glen, results in them being unrelated to the surrounding woodland character on the sides of the glen and fragments the overall integrity of the floor of the glen. The removal of these shelterbelts would enhance the character of this area.

With regard to the floor of the glen, there are several land-use alternatives which could be considered. These are:

- The existing boggy unimproved pasture character could be extended by blocking drains and allowing the River Dee to flood the area as part of the natural cycle of the river. These measures would create an extensive marshy area which would vary its character relative to rainfall and snowmelt patterns, becoming predominantly water covered at these times whilst possibly drying out in periods of little or no rainfall. The character of this area would not be significantly different to that which currently exists, although there may be a gradual influx of more marshland type vegetation. The colour and texture of the floor would continue to contrast with the woodland and heather of the adjacent hillsides.
- The floor of the glen could become improved pasture which would have a similar character to that at Inverey. The bright green, well managed pastures would accentuate the contrast between the floor of the glen and the hillsides in terms of colour, texture and land-use, as well as emphasise the scale and flatness of the floor of the glen itself.

## • **ADJACENT ESTATE ISSUES**

### **General Liaison**

Chapter 3 has outlined the different landscape characters throughout the Estate and has indicated where these characters extent outwith the Estate boundary. Given the main emphasis of the landscape strategy is to conserve and enhance the landscape character diversity of the Estate, the activities of adjacent estates in terms of land management and other proposals can have potential effects on existing landscape character within the Estate.

It is therefore recommended that NTS initiate liaisons with all Estates which bound Mar Lodge Estate. The purpose of this liaison would be to:

- Allow NTS to explain their approach to the management of the Estate.
- Obtain an understanding of the problems experienced and initiatives being undertaken/considered by adjacent estates.
- Establish the willingness of adjacent estates to assist NTS in achieving its objectives for the Estate where appropriate.
- Establish joint initiatives to achieve common objectives.
- Establish where NTS can contribute to or assist in achieving the objectives of other estates.

### **General Monitoring of Adjacent Estates**

In order to safeguard the landscape character of the Estate from development or other land use changes outwith the Estate boundary which might adversely affect that landscape character, NTS should monitor all planning applications, forestry schemes, etc, rigorously examining these to establish their potential effect on the landscape character



of the Estate. As appropriate, NTS should support those proposals which are considered could contribute to the enhancement of landscape character or seek to have applications refused or modified where considered they could have a detrimental effect on landscape character.

### **Native Woodland Initiatives**

The earlier section on native woodland restoration has outlined the role that adjacent estates, particularly Invercauld, could play in the expansion of native woodlands as part of the overall Forest of Mar initiative.

Through detailed liaison with adjacent estates, NTS should ensure that their proposals for native woodland restoration are compatible in landscape and visual terms with those of adjacent estates in relation to issues of scale, extent and nature in order that sudden changes in woodland pattern along the Estate boundary are avoided.

### **Woodland Management**

Chapter 3 has outlined areas of woodland outwith the Estate boundary which make an important contribution to the landscape character of particular areas of the Estate. These woodlands are those on Creag an Fhithich, which were specifically planted by the Earl of Fife to improve the setting of Mar Lodge, and Morrone Birkwood.

NTS should seek to ensure that these woodlands are managed in a manner which sustains the visual contribution which they make to landscape character. This should include issues such as avoiding clear felling of areas, retaining the diversity of species and retaining the overall pattern and scale of woodland cover.

### **Inverey Pastures**

The description of the Mar Lodge Policies Landscape Character Area has indicated the important contribution which the Inverey pastures makes to the general landscape character of the area. NTS should seek to ensure that these improved pastures are retained in their current appearance by appropriate management measures in order that they continue to make a positive contribution to the landscape character of the Estate.

### **Glen Ey Access Track**

The description of the Dalvorar Landscape Character Area has indicated the adverse visual effect that the access track on the east side of Glen Ey has on the landscape character of the area. NTS should seek to have this access track re-vegetated in order, in the long-term, that it does not detract from the landscape character of the area. NTS's experience on the Beinn à Bhuird access track should be made available to Mar Estate to assist in achieving this objective.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **SUMMARY**





## **7.1 THE MAR LODGE ESTATE LANDSCAPE**

Mar Lodge Estate has a rich diversity of landscape character, containing a range of Landscape Types and Landscape Character Areas which are typical of the wider Cairngorms landscape. Elevated granite plateaux, with deep corries and glens, occupy much of the northern section of the Estate where the vast scale of the scenery and bareness of the ground are dominant characteristics. The southern section of the Estate comprises a combination of glens containing remnants of native woodland and more recent plantations, open moorlands which date from a period when sporting activity was a dominant feature of the Estate and the partly settled upper section of Deeside, where Mar Lodge and its associated policies form an important focal element of the glen. These areas of the Estate represent a more managed, cultural landscape and contrast with the backdrop of the high plateaux.

The Estate also contains various other special landscape attributes, some of which occur elsewhere throughout the Cairngorms, such as the plateaux, native woodlands and moorlands, whilst others, such as its built heritage, gorges and waterfalls and archaeological features are specific to the Mar Lodge Estate.

These features of the Mar Lodge Estate landscape result in the Estate containing a greater diversity of landscape character than most other Cairngorm estates.

## **7.2 LANDSCAPE CHANGE**

Geology and geomorphology have created a series of physical features which still dominate much of the landscape character of the Estate. Man's activities, particularly in terms of agriculture, timber production and exploitation, and sporting activity have been important factors in the evolution of the landscape to that which exists today. Specific improvement measures in terms of built features and planting resulted from national trends during the Age of Improvement and the Victorian era.

The landscape of the Estate is not a static feature, but continues to evolve in its appearance and character related to planning, land-use and estate management pressures, policies and initiatives, which all have the potential to result in landscape change.

There is a need to carefully consider the landscape implications of such forces for landscape change to ensure proper consideration of how to accommodate them without detriment to landscape character or the visual appearance of the landscape.

Proposed estate management initiatives currently being considered by NTS form the most important of these forces for change. Native woodland restoration, forest plantation restructuring, the conservation of wild land quality, moorland and deer management and buildings and access policies all have the potential to result in some form of landscape change whilst also offering the opportunity to conserve and enhance the existing landscape character of the Estate.

### 7.3 LANDSCAPE STRATEGY AND GUIDELINES

In response to the range and diversity of landscape character which exists throughout the Estate, a landscape strategy has been developed which has as its key objectives:-

- **to conserve and enhance the existing landscape character diversity of the Estate.**
- **to conserve and enhance those landscape elements and attributes which make particular areas distinctive, and which make a positive contribution to existing landscape character.**

This strategy is then interpreted through a series of guidelines which provide advice on the landscape and visual implications on existing landscape character of particular proposed estate management initiatives. The Guidelines are organised to initially address the issue of the Forest of Mar/Strathspey which applies throughout the Cairngorms, followed by guidance on 'Estate Wide' issues which are considered to apply throughout all of large sections of the Estate. These issues include native woodland restoration, existing plantations, wild land quality, derelict buildings, moorland and deer management. Issues which are not included in these sections and which are Landscape Type or Landscape Character Area specific are then considered, including issues such as built development, car parking, camping, signage and management of the Mar Lodge policies. Finally, issues of adjacent estates which could affect landscape character within Mar Lodge Estate are considered. Where different scenarios or options are available, the landscape implications of adopting each alternative are discussed to provide a basis for decision-making in the full knowledge of the likely effects on landscape character.

The main emphasis of the guidelines has been the need to consider the implications on landscape character at both a strategic and a detailed level. The understanding of the elements which combine to make particular areas distinctive is a crucial basis from which to make these considerations and is the foundation from which sensitive design and management guidelines can be formulated which respect those elements. Given the diversity of landscape character throughout the Estate, the guidelines indicate the need for all potential landscape change to be strategically planned and sensitively designed and managed.

The landscape character of much of Mar Lodge Estate which exists today has resulted from the activity, influence and intervention of man. Man will continue to influence the visual appearance of the Estate, as a result of the estate management initiatives which are being proposed, all of which require some form of intervention into the existing situation, either by continuing, ceasing, amending or introducing specific measures. The implications of these initiatives on the existing landscape character of the Estate, in visual, spatial and cultural terms, are an important consideration in the formulation of an overall Management Plan for the Estate.

However, landscape considerations are only one, albeit important, factor in the formulation of a long-term Management Plan for Mar Lodge Estate. This report aims to provide a valuable contribution to the formulation of that Management Plan in order that long-term decisions on the future of the Estate can take due recognition of the likely implications on landscape character which may be associated with particular initiatives or measures. In this way, this report will assist in providing a basis from which future land-use, land management and other measures can be sensitively planned, designed and managed for the benefit of those who live, work and visit throughout the area.

## **APPENDICES**





**APPENDIX A - ESTATE BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES**

**LISTED BUILDINGS**

**Mar Lodge (including St Ninians Chapel and Stable Block)** - Category B listing. Begun 1895. Architect A Marshall Mackenzie. Large 2 storey building with two advanced wings at obtuse angle to main block. Coursed rock-faced granite with mock half timbered gables. Red tiled roof with carved bargee boards. Formerly there were verandahs. Badly damaged by fire in 1991 and totally rebuilt to highest specification. Ballroom within curtilage of lodge contains a display of over 3,000 antlers. Chapel in Norman Revival style of coursed rubble with slate roof and is in occasional ecclesiastical use. Stable block entirely refitted and upgraded in 1989. Remnant of walled garden between lodge and stable block.

**Victoria Bridge** - Category B listing. C.1905, architect unknown. Three span lattice girder bridge on battered round-ended piers. Iron horseshoe arch with inscription. Formal entrance to estate.

**Victoria Lodge** - Category B listing. 19th century, architect unknown. One storey house in coursed granite with piended slate roof.

**Derry Lodge** - Category C(S) listing. C.1880 - architect unknown. Small-scale shooting lodge comprising 1 - 1 ½ storey with attic. Squared granite rubble with vertical snecking. Central door with rustic porch. Slate roof with 3 gabled dormers and overhanging eaves. Some later additions to rear.

**Queen Victoria’s Picnic Cottage** - Category C(S) listing. C.1850 - architect unknown. Single storey, 3 bay rustic cottage of granite rubble with pinnings. Formerly with 2 columned rustic porch. Shingle roof with timber bracketed overhanging eaves. Originally with 12 pane sash and case glazing pattern.

**OTHER BUILDINGS**

**Occupied/In Use**

- Cairn na Drochaide
- Craggan
- Workshop/Sawmill
- Deer Larder
- Mar Forest Cottage
- Allanaquoich Hay Shed
- Derry Lodge Barn
- Mountain Rescue Post, Derry Lodge
- Bob Scott's Bothy
- The Cottage
- Loin-a-veaich

**Unoccupied**

- Allanaquoich
- Quoich Cottage
- Red House
- Geldie Lodge
- Bynack Lodge
- Luibeg Cottage

**Mountain Refuge Huts**

- Corrour Bothy
- Hutchison Memorial Hut
- Garbh Coire Bothy

**STRUCTURES**

**Bridges - Vehicular**

Inverey Bridge (Public Road)  
Linn of Dee Bridge (Public Road)  
Lui Bridge (Public Road)  
Quoich Bridge  
White Bridge  
Black Bridge, Glen Lui  
Bridge over Lui Water, Derry Lodge

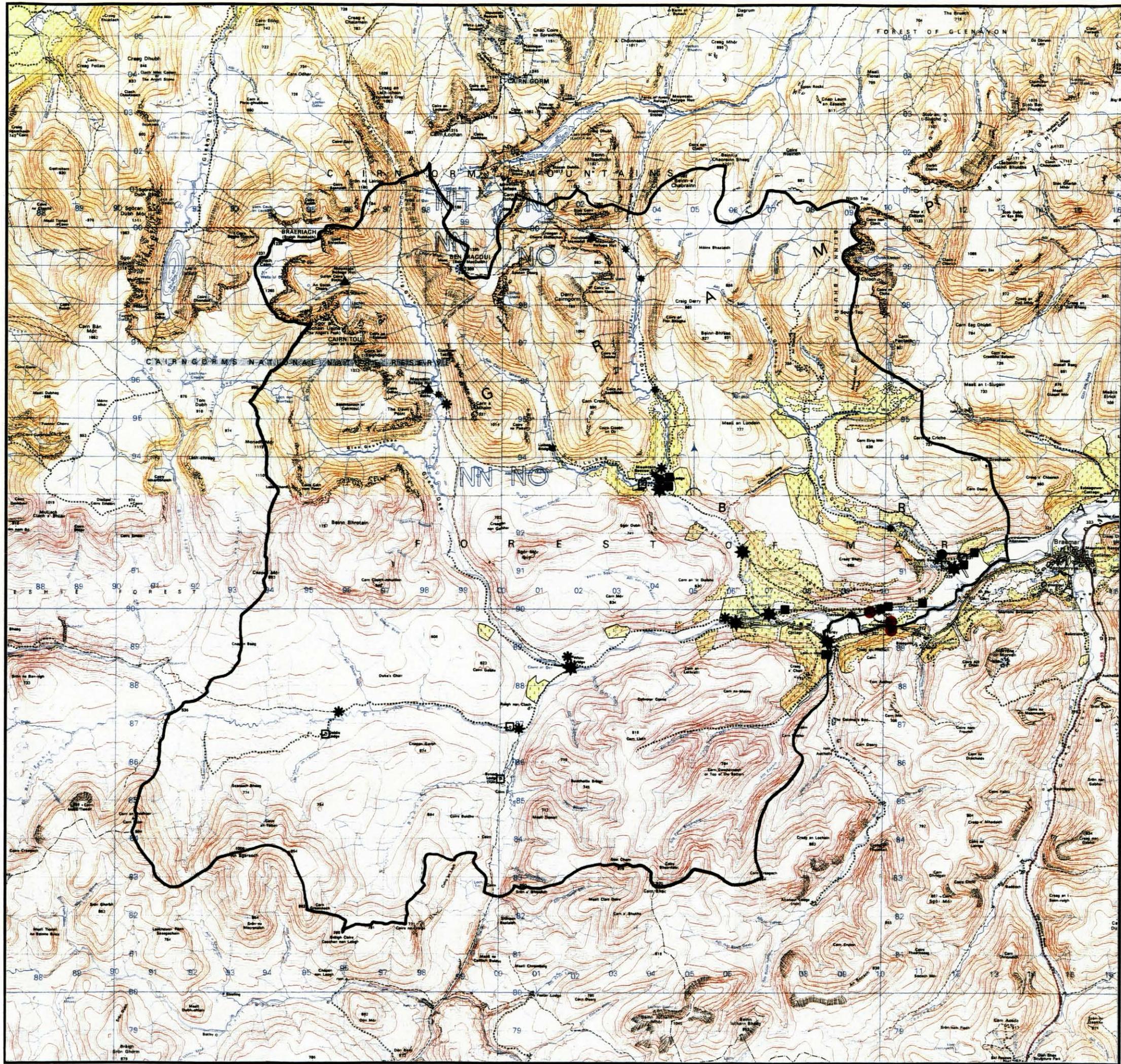
**Footbridges**

Suspension Bridge, River Dee (remnants only)  
Linn of Quoich  
Quoich Water (temporary)  
Derry Burn, Derry Lodge  
Derry Burn, Glen Derry  
Glas Allt Mor  
Coire Etchachan Burn  
Luibeg Bridge  
River Dee, Corroul

**SIGNPOSTS (Scottish Rights of Way Society signs and others)**









Linn of Dee  
White Bridge  
Red House (track/footpath junction)  
Geldie (track/footpath junction)  
Derry Lodge (footbridge)  
Corroul (Lairig Ghru path)

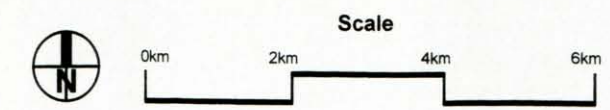




## Appendix Estate Buildings and Structures

### Legend

-  Category B Listed Building
-  Category C Listed Building
-  Building - Occupied / In Use
-  Building - Unoccupied
-  Mountain Refuge Hut
-  Vehicular Bridge
-  Footbridge
-  Sign Post

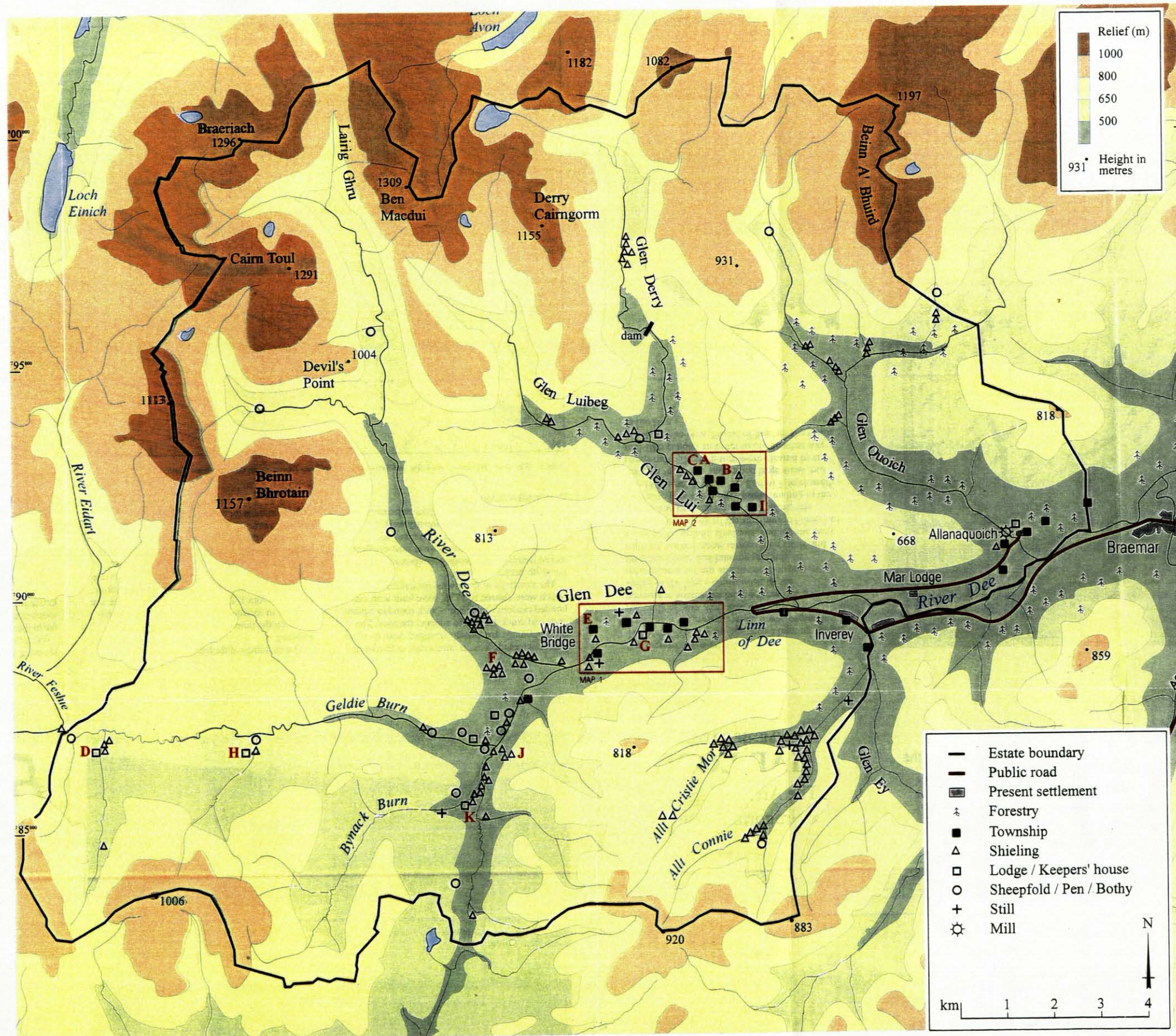


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APPENDIX B

LIST OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES RECORDED BY RCAHMS  
(The sites are listed by OS 1:10,000 quarter sheet and by NMRS number)

NN98NE				24.00	NO 049 890	Glen Dee	Buildings; Huts
1.00	NN 9548 8672	Geldie Lodge	Shooting-lodge;	25.00	NO 044 851	Allt Cristie Mor	Shieling-huts
			Sheepfold;	26.00	NO 00008573	Bynack Burn	Huts; Pens
			Shieling-huts; Pens	27.00	NO 00148630	Bynack Burn	Building
1.01	NN 9548 8672	Geldie Lodge	Shooting-lodge; Stables	28.00	NO 05658682	Geldie Burn	Road; Field bank
1.02	NN 9556 8689	Geldie Lodge	Sheepfold	29.00	NO 00298688	Geldie Burn	House
1.03	NN 9556 8669	Geldie Lodge	Shieling-huts;	NO08SE			
			Building-stance; Pens	2.00	NO 06 84	Allt Connie	Shieling-huts
2.00	NN 9917 8709	Geldie Burn	Shieling-hut	2.01	NO 060 848	Allt Coire	
3.00	NN 9930 8701	Geldie Burn	Stock enclosure			Bheamaist	Shieling-huts
4.00	NN 9952 8545	Bynack Burn	Still	2.02	NO 063 848	Allt Connie	Shieling-huts
5.00	NN 9990 8574	Bynack Burn	Building; Pen	NO08SW			
NN98NW				1.00	NO 001 832	Dubh Alltan Beag	Shieling-huts
1.00	NN 9144 8727	River Feshie	Shieling-huts	NO09NE			
2.00	NN 9167 8705	Geldie Burn	Pen	1.00	NO 0662 9785	Allt an	
3.00	NN 923 868	Black Bothy	Shieling-huts; Buildings			Dubh-Ghlinne	Huts; Pens
NN98SE				2.00	NO 07409535	Duhh-Ghleann	Shieling-huts
1.00	NN 99808384	Cnapan an Laoigh	Shieling-huts; Pen	3.00	NO 0865 9529	Glen Quoich	Shieling-huts; Building
NN98SW				NO09NW			
1.00	NN 922 847	Allt a' Chaorainn	Shieling-huts	1.00		Cancelled	
NN99NE				2.00	NO 039 957	Glen Derry	Dam
1.00	NN 9811 9579	Corrour Bothy	Building	3.00	NO 035 975	Glen Derry	Shieling-huts; Kiln; Pen
NN99SE				NO09SE			
1.00	NN 9572 9413	Glen Geusachan	Pen	1.00	NO 062 918	Lui Water	Township
2.00	NN 98549142	Allt Garbh	Sheep-pens	2.00	NO 057 922	Lui Water	Township; Lime kiln
NO08NE				3.00	NO 055 924	Lui Water	Township; Lime kiln
8.00	NO 066 898	Muir	Township	4.00	NO 052 925	Lui Water	Township
13.00	NO 0763 8980	Mar Forest Cottage	Building	5.00	NO 050 926	Lui Water	Township
14.00	NO 085 888	Loinavoick	Township; Lime Kiln	6.00	NO 053 921	Lui Water	Township; Stills
15.00	NO 082 894	Little Inverey	Township	7.00	NO 0795 9484	Dubh-Ghleann	Shieling-huts
16.00	NO 050 892	Glen Dee	Huts	8.00	NO 058 918	Lui Water	Township
17.00	NO 055 867	Allt Cristie Mor	Shieling-huts	9.00	NO 079 937	Allt Clais	
18.00	NO 97 86	Allt Connie	Shieling-huts; Still			Fhearnaig	Shieling-huts
18.01	NO 071 868	Allt Cristie Mor	Shieling-huts; Still	NO09SW			
18.02	NO 072 861	Allt Connie	Shieling-huts	1.00	NO 0411 9338	Derry Lodge	Shooting-lodge
18.03	NO 071 856	Allt Connie	Shieling-huts	2.00	NO 0424 9012	Allt Creag	
19.00	NO 0818 8766	Cam Bhithir	Still	3.00	NO 01909375	Phadruig	Hut
NO08NW				4.00	NO 035 934	Glen Luibeg	Shieling-huts
1.00	NO 040 893	Dalvorar	Township; Shooting-lodge			Luibeg	Shieling-huts; Sheepfold
2.00	NO 002 894	Coire na Cula	Shieling-huts; Buildings; Pens	4.01	NO 0388 9338	Luibeg	Shieling-huts
3.00	NO 046 893	Creag Phadraig	Township	4.02	NO 0355 9344	Luibeg	Shieling-huts
4.00	NO 0345 8940	Tonnamoine	Township; Still	4.03	NO 0338 9335	Luibeg	Shieling-huts; Pen
7.00	NO 027 892	Tonnagaoithe	Township; Huts; Pits; Rig				Pit
7.01	NO 025 886	Tonnagaoithe	Huts	4.04	NO 037R 9337	Luibeg	Sheepfold
9.00	NO 028 887	Dubrach	Township; Still	5.00	NO 0478 9258	Glen Lui	Huts; Rig; Drain
10.00	NO 0045 8686	Geldie Burn	Shieling hut	NO19NW			
11.00	NO 007 884	Chest of Dee	Shieling huts	1.00	NO 100 164	Allt an t-Sneachda	Buildings; Hut
12.00	NO 013 887	Chest of Dee	Shieling huts	2.00	NO 101 959	Allt an t-Sneachda	Building; Huts
13.00	NO 0189 8849	White Bridge	Shieling hut	NO19SW			
14.00	NO 047 888	Dalvorar Burn	Huts	4.00	NO 116 911	Linn of Quoich	Sawmill; Buildings
15.00	NO 0486 89710	Creag Phadruig	Building	16.00	NO 1315 9183	West Allt Coultain	Buildings
16.00	NO 007 873	Ruigh nan Clach	Buildings	17.00	NO 13611 9194	East Allt Coultain	Township
17.00	NO 0005 8555	Bynack Lodge	Shooting lodge; Kennels; Stables; Game larder	18.00	NO 119 912	Allanaquoich	Township; Lime kiln
			Shieling huts	19.00	NO 115 909	Lochan	
18.00	NO 004 852	Allt Bhronn	Dyke; Shieling-huts			a' Chreagain	Township; Shieling-huts
19.00	NO 004 861	Bynack Burn	Sheep dip; Bothy; Pens; Sheepfolds				Kilns
19.01	NO 0023 8573	Bynack Burn	Shieling huts	20.00	NO 1181 9116	Linn of Quoich	Mill; Building
19.02	NO 0036 8611	Bynack Burn	Shieling huts	21.00	NO 112 903	Cragan	Township
19.03	NO 0048 8611	Bynack Burn	Shieling huts	22.00	NO 1235 9146	Caim na Drochaide	Buildings
19.04	NO 0052 8643	Bynack Burn	Shieling huts	22.01	NO 1235 9149	Caim na Drochaide	Building
19.05	NO 0063 8669	Bynack Burn	Shieling huts				
19.06	NO 0085 8665	Bynack Burn	Shieling huts; Sheepfolds; Pens				
			Dyke; Sheepfold; Sheep-dip; Bothy				
19.07	NO 0042 8673	Bynack Burn	Shieling huts; Sheep-dip; Stock Enclosure				
20.00	NO 0090 8722	Geldie Burn	Township				
			Buildings				
21.00	NO 0125 8775	Allt an t-Sionnach	Sheepfold;				
22.00	NO 0127 8781	White Bridge	Shieling-huts				
23.00	NO 0015 8691	Geldie Burn					



## **APPENDIX C - STUDY OF METHODOLOGY**

- 1 The study was undertaken in accordance with the methodology set out in Landscape Assessment Guidance (CCP423) by the Countryside Commission, and followed the broad sequence of work defined in NTS's brief of November 1995.
- 2 The landscape character of the study area was defined through a combination of desk study, consultations, field survey and graphic and written description.
- 3 A brief literature review was undertaken, examining general guides to the study area and other publications. This initial review broadened our knowledge of the area and aided our understanding of the key factors which have shaped today's landscape of the Mar Lodge Estate.
- 4 Broad areas of similar landscape character were defined by overlaying 1:50,000 scale simplified geology, topographic and land cover classification maps. Four Generic Landscape Types were identified at this initial stage and these subdivided into twelve more specific Landscape Character Areas.

These broad zonations were then used as the basis for undertaking the field survey. Between two and three viewpoints for each Landscape Character Area were also defined as part of this desk study. Viewpoints were selected on the basis of their ability to give an elevated view over the Character Area and to enable us to see the visual relationship with adjoining Character Areas and therefore define boundaries. Other, more popular viewpoints were also defined, near a road or footpath, for example.

- 5 Consultations with various bodies and individuals were undertaken and these provided information on landscape character, special features, past landscape change and the issues currently and potentially affecting the Estate.
- 6 In view of the short timescale in which to carry out the field survey, we used two experienced Landscape Architects, to verify and assess in detail the broad Landscape Types and Landscape Character Areas identified in the desk top study. A 'visual checklist' was used from each viewpoint to record principal landscape features, attractors and any detractors and assess the sensitivity of each Character Area to change. The field survey verified the Landscape Types and Landscape Character Areas identified in the desk study and allowed the refining of their extent and boundaries.



## APPENDIX D - BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX E

List of Field Survey Viewpoints Locations

No	Grid Ref	Location	Transponder	Notes
1	132919	Estate Boundary	NO	Located on access track in line with Estate march directly below ruins of former cottage.
2	107906 (approx)	Hillside north-east of Lodge	NO	Furthest extent of access track at turning area below footpath to mast.
3	088904	Hillside north-west of Lodge	NO	On access track at junction with footpath from Mar Lodge.
4	062896	Linn of Dee	NO	Centre of bridge.
5	052887	Hillside below Carn an Leth-allt	NO	South-west corner of deer fence at end of access track. (Note existing fence line not as indicated on 1:50,000 OS map.)
6	077883	Creag à Chait	YES	Beside end of access track at small cairn at edge of peat bog.
7	071887	Hillside north-west of Creag à Chait	YES	From Viewpoint 6, proceed north-westwards to prominent, large cairn partly visible on skyline. Continue to edge of steep hillside overlooking Linn of Dee at smaller cairn generally in line with grouse screens on upper hillslope. Transponder on south side of small cairn.
8	125907	Layby on Linn of Dee Road	NO	
9	102898	Mar Lodge avenue	NO	Access track at start of avenue on north-side of policy shelterbelt.
10	096899	Mar Lodge	NO	Centre of forecourt.
11	080939	Glen Quoich	NO	Elevated pull-off area immediately north of Clais Fhernaig footpath junction.
12	079963	Beinn à Bhuird track	YES	Southern edge of bulldozed area at sharp corner in access track (no assessment undertaken due to poor weather conditions).
13	082961	Beinn à Bhuird track	YES	Beside timber pole on uphill side just south-east of corner in access track.
14	101921	Glen Quoich	NO	On access track directly above timber footbridge crossing Quoich Water.
15	115913	Punch Bowl, Glen Quoich	NO	Footbridge over Quoich Water.

## **APPENDIX F - LANDSCAPE MONITORING**

### **General**

The purpose of landscape monitoring is to monitor the extent and rate of change in the appearance of the landscape throughout the Estate over a prolonged period of time. Such change can be considered in relation to an intended landscape character plan to ensure that change is occurring in a manner which is not detrimental to such a plan.

For landscape monitoring to be effective, it requires the following:

- 1 A series of viewpoints which can be readily located over a prolonged period of time.
- 2 A comprehensive base line landscape description/assessment for each viewpoint against which to assess any future change.
- 3 A consistent methodology which can be undertaken by various persons over a prolonged period of time.
- 4 A long-term landscape 'vision' for the Estate against which any change can be considered in terms of contributing towards such as 'vision'.
- 5 A suitable mechanism for incorporating recommendations from the landscape monitoring programme into the Estate Management Plan.

### **Viewpoints**

Table 1 indicates 25 viewpoints which would form the basis for the landscape monitoring programme. These viewpoints have been selected to:-

- 1 Ensure a comprehensive visual coverage of the whole Estate and its immediate environs.
- 2 Provide a mix of elevated locations where complete Landscape Character Areas can be viewed, together with their inter-relationship with adjacent Landscape Character Areas, and low level locations which relate more directly to visitors use of the Estate.

Where viewpoints are not directly related to a fixed feature or location, the use of transponders or similar to assist long-term accurate relocation of the viewpoint should be adopted. A detailed written description of the location of each viewpoint should be produced, with accompanying photographs as appropriate.

### **Methodology**

The first stage would be to establish baseline information in terms of a photographic record and landscape description for each viewpoint. Photography should be undertaken using a level tripod, a 50mm lens, a standard type of film and should produce a 360° panorama. Photography should be undertaken during the same month of the year on each occasion. A 10 year interval between monitoring is considered appropriate. The baseline photography should be accompanied by a landscape description, produced on site at the time the photography is undertaken. The landscape description should follow a consistent format for each viewpoint. The Mar Lodge Estate Landscape Assessment will form the basis for these descriptions.



Subsequent stages of the landscape monitoring programme will involve comparing contemporary photography and descriptions against the baseline information for each viewpoint. Information on land use, vegetation or other form of changes which can be mapped or measured should be also utilised. The visual, written and measured information should be related to the key characteristics of the baseline information in terms of the extent and nature of any perceivable change in the appearance of the landscape from each viewpoint. This change should be considered in terms of:-

- changes in land use, vegetation type, extent and pattern
- the addition or omission of particular elements or features
- the extent or degree of openness or enclosure

Simple objective statements should outline any such changes. These changes should then be interpreted in terms of their significance, considering if the appearance of the landscape has improved or been enhanced, not been affected or been changed to its detriment. The rationale and reasoning behind such considerations must be clearly stated. The significance of such changes may be supported by additional detailed photographs of particular areas of the Estate which could be used to project potential changes to landscape character in the longer term. The assessments of landscape change for each viewpoint should be considered collectively in terms of change throughout the Estate and a summary conclusion produced.

These conclusions should then be considered in relation to an overall landscape 'vision' for the Estate, in terms of whether this change is contributing positively or negatively towards this vision. Recommendations should be developed for consideration in the review of the Estate Management Plan, in terms of trying to increase the rate of landscape change where appropriate, avoid further detrimental change or rectify the results of previous detrimental change.

TABLE 1

List of Landscape Monitoring Viewpoint Locations

No	Location	Grid Ref	Notes
1	Stob Coire Etchachan	025005	
2	Ben Macdui	989989	Use top of triangulation pillar
3	Beinn à Bhuird track	079963	Southern edge of bulldozed area at sharp corner in access track. Transponder installed on field survey
4	Glen Derry	039957	Prominent knoll to west of track
5	Lairig Ghru footpath	985956	Junction of track to Corroul
6	The Devil's Point	977951	
7	Carn Crom	023955	Identify optimum location to view Glens Derry, Luibeg and Lui
8	Luibeg Bridge	014942	
9	Glen Quoich	080939	Elevated pull-off area immediately north of Clais Fhernaig footpath junction
10	Luibeg Cottage	038933	
11	Sgòr Dubh	034921	Identify optimum location to view Glens Derry, Luibeg and Lui
12	Estate boundary	132919	Access track below ruins of former cottage
13	Creag Bhalg	104915	Prominent north-east ridge above woodland overlooking Glen Quoich
14	Black Bridge	063914	
15	Creag Bhag	107096 (approx)	Furthest extent of access track on south facing hillside at turing area below footpath to mast
16	Layby on Linn of Dee Road	125907	
17	Mar Lodge	096899	Centre of forecourt
18	Inverey Bridge	086892	
19	Hillside north-west of Creag à Chait	071887	From end of Creag à Chait track, proceed north-westwards to prominent large cairn partly visible on skyline. Continue to edge of steep hillside overlooking Linn of Dee at smaller cairn generally in line with grouse screens on upper hillslope. Transponder installed on field survey on south side of small cairn
20	Hillside below Carn an Leth-allt	052887	South-west corner of deer fence at end of access track
21	Creag an Fhithich	098888	
22	Cairn Geldie	996885	

No	Location	Grid Ref	Notes
23	White Bridge	019885	
24	Geldie Lodge	955867	
25	Unnamed Summit	011860	Prominent summit north-east of Bynack Lodge and due west of Point 719.





## SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE

Scottish Natural Heritage is a government body established by Parliament in 1992, responsible to the Secretary of State for Scotland.

Our task is to secure the conservation and enhancement of Scotland's unique and precious natural heritage - the wildlife, the habitats, the landscapes and the seascapes - which has evolved through the long partnership between people and nature.

We advise on policies and promote projects that aim to improve the natural heritage and support its sustainable use.

Our aim is to help people to enjoy Scotland's natural heritage responsibly, understand it more fully and use it wisely so that it can be sustained for future generations.

